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LONDON: T. FISHER UNWIN.

# The Barbarian Invasions of Italy

THEODORA AND HER LADIES

*(From the Mosaics at Ravenna.)*

# The Barbarian Invasions of Italy

BY

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TRANSLATED BY

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WITH FRONTISPIECE AND MAPS

VOL. II

NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
153–157, FIFTH AVENUE
1902

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## CHAPTER VIII

### TOTILA, KING OF THE GOTHS—BELISARIUS AGAIN COMES TO ITALY AND OCCUPIES ROME—HIS RETURN TO CONSTANTINOPLE AND HIS DEATH

In the year 540, when Antioch was captured by the Persians, Belisarius entered Constantinople at the head of his 7,000 bodyguards, bearing the royal treasures of the Goths and accompanied by Witigis and the other prisoners. For the second time he brought a captive barbarian monarch to the capital of the East. He was now thirty-six years of age; therefore, still in the prime of life, and also at the zenith of his glory and good fortune. But already precursory signs were becoming visible of the disasters which were about to destroy his happiness, poison his existence, and sap his manly strength. No official triumph was accorded him, as on his return from the African war, although the people welcomed him with the enthusiasm due to so great a conqueror. The first misfortune to assail him was the suspected infidelity of his wife, which cruelly embittered his days. Having to go off to the Persian war, harassed by this atrocious fear and persecuted by Theodora, who had taken Antonina under her protection, he achieved little success in the field. On returning to Constantinople and discovering that there was no longer any room for doubt as to his wife's proceedings, he was obliged to decide on imprisoning the

guilty woman, although he still loved her. Worst of all, Antonina had most cleverly managed to win the favour of the Empress Theodora, by forwarding her intrigues and helping to persecute her enemies.

For some time past John of Cappadocia had become enormously powerful at Court. He was addicted to the most abominable vices and devoured by ambition, but he was a most successful tax-collector, often exacting money by means of such cruel tortures, that certain of his victims were said to have hung themselves as the only means of escape. Justinian protected him as a most useful instrument for augmenting the revenues of the State, while Theodora hated him on account of his domineering ambition. So Antonina, in order to curry more favour with the Empress, cunningly contrived to make the man divulge his schemes of self-advancement and his secret designs against the Emperor. Consequently John was sent into banishment, reduced to misery, forced to assume priestly robes, and go about begging his daily bread. The wretched close of this villain's career seems, in fact, as Hodgkin remarks, to have originated the legend that afterwards assigned a similar end to Belisarius. At all events, we know for certain that Theodora became increasingly attached to Antonina and hostile to the general, and after obliging him to release his guilty spouse and take her once more to his bosom, still continued to persecute him with insult and humiliation.

Meanwhile, ever since Belisarius had departed from Italy with all his best captains and his famous guards, the state of things in that country had grown worse and worse. There was no chief of sufficient authority to take the supreme command, no new civil government had been formed. The whole administration was either entrusted to the military leaders and troops scattered about the land

in various cities, or in the hands of the tax-gatherers. The revenue was rapidly decreasing, and there was no hope of obtaining funds from Constantinople, where every resource was being strained to provide for the expenses of the Persian war and maintain peace by dint of paying subsidies to the threatening barbarian tribes on the borders of the Empire. Accordingly, the most sordid and miserable economy had to be practised in Italy. Coins were clipped, the soldiers' pay was in arrear, their promotion deferred; public offices were put up to sale, the most necessary public works were neglected, even the aqueducts being left unrepaired. Therefore there was much disaffection among the soldiery; many deserted the ranks, while others tried to recoup themselves by preying on the people who had so largely contributed to the success of the Imperial arms. But, being now reduced to the last depth of misery, Italians began to regret the loss of their barbarian rulers, and thus the prospects of the Goths rapidly revived.

In fact, King Hildibad, who had remained in command of barely one thousand men, suddenly found himself at the head of a considerable army, and became master of nearly the whole of Northern Italy. But likewise among the Goths there was much disorder and little unity. Even in earlier days they had never been able to form a really united nation in Italy, and now, more than ever, seemed a horde of separate bands of adventurers, commanded by captains of discordant views. The lurking jealousy between the wife of Uraias, who had refused the Gothic crown, and the consort of Hildibad who had accepted it, grew so acute that their husbands were infected with the same passion. So Hildibad killed Uraias and was murdered in his turn in the spring of 541. A considerable number of Rugians had accompanied the Goths into Italy, but never entirely amalga-

mated with them, and now, on Hildibad's death, they proclaimed Eraric king by raising him on their shields, and the Goths accepted this Rugian chief. But he was incapable of doing anything, and only tried to negotiate with Constantinople for the purpose of erecting a little State of his own in Northern Italy between Frank and Byzantine territory, and placing himself at the Emperor's mercy. So his soldiers, on seeing all their hopes betrayed, murdered him after five months of his inglorious rule, but not before they had offered his crown to Baduila, the chieftain better known to history by the name of Totila. The latter being a kinsman of Hildibad would only accept the crown on condition that Eraric were first put to death.

Totila restored the fortunes of the Goths, ruling over them for eleven years, and always winning glory in the field. He was the grandest example of Ostrogoth valour, and not only gave constant proofs of his daring as a leader, but was also remarkable as a strategist and statesman. In fact, whereas the Byzantines sought to preserve their power in Italy by plundering and blackmailing the poorer classes, and thus favouring the great landowners who were their chief supporters—until alienated later on by perpetual taxation—Totila relied upon the people, the peasantry, and the small farmers, treating them all in the best possible way, and allowing even numbers of slaves to enter his army. "Throughout Italy," says Procopius, "Totila avoided doing injury to the peasants, merely enjoining them to cultivate the land in the ordinary manner, and pay the same tribute to him that they had formerly paid to the government and to the proprietors of the soil" (iii. 13). But he bore heavily on the great landowners, whom he sometimes expropriated; he seized their revenues, and even those of the Church, inasmuch as even in those days the Church possessed enormous

estates, and was therefore doubly odious to him, the Goths being all of the Arian creed.

The Imperial generals assembled in Ravenna had decided to advance with 12,000 men on Verona and Pavia; but after one successful engagement were compelled to withdraw towards Faenza. Totila, having already collected a force of 5,000 men, then took the offensive, crossed the Pò, and by skilled strategy succeeded in thoroughly defeating the enemy and driving them to take refuge within the city walls. He next made a bold march over the Apennines with the intention of taking possession of Southern Italy, where he hoped to find it easier to provision his army and obtain stores of corn from the neighbouring island of Sicily. He would be then in a position to threaten Rome, and compel the Imperials to divide their forces. Meanwhile, however, his first attempt to invest Florence with a portion of his army was frustrated by the Byzantine garrison, who, with the aid of a reinforcement from Ravenna, sallied from the gates and repulsed the besiegers. But soon afterwards they were defeated by the Goths, and thus Totila was able to pursue his advance upon Naples without molestation (542). At that time the only cities held by the Imperialists were Florence, Spoleto, Perugia, Rome, Ravenna, and Naples. It was very important for the Goths to capture the latter, not only because it was one of the principal cities of Southern Italy, and connected with Sicily, but also because it formed a good starting-point for operations against Rome. Accordingly Totila established his headquarters near Naples, at the same time sending off detachments into Apulia, the Basilicata, and the Calabrian provinces. The garrison of Naples only consisted of 1,000 infantry, but as Justinian appreciated the strategic value of the position, he now hastened to send several ships laden with men

and stores. But Totila was prepared to cope with any emergency, and profiting by a storm at sea that delayed the arrival of some of the vessels, he defeated the enemy and compelled the city to surrender (543). The members of the garrison were allowed to march out unhurt, and the life and property of the citizens were strictly respected, for King Totila maintained very rigid discipline in the Gothic army that he was about to lead to the siege of Rome.

All Italy, in fact, seemed on the point of falling into his power, for by this time only a few cities remained to the Byzantines, whose incapable, quarrelsome generals were already writing to Constantinople as though the Imperial cause in Italy were hopelessly lost.

Totila therefore felt sure of success, sent missives to the Senate and issued proclamations broadcast inviting the inhabitants of Rome and other parts to make common cause with him. So Justinian decided that Belisarius must be sent to resume the command in Italy (544). The general, however, was a sadly changed man after all the storm of troubles, of unjust persecution, and basest ingratitude by which he had been assailed. Crushed by all these sorrows, he had been forced to abase himself before the wife who had betrayed him, was even accused of stealing part of the Gothic treasure to cover his own lavish expenditure, and when sorely harassed with grief had been recalled from the Persian war because no great success had attended his arms. Besides all this he had been deprived of all his offices and emoluments, his body-guard disbanded, and his friends forbidden to approach him. So, being thus forsaken by all, the stricken man was often seen wandering alone through the streets of Constantinople, well knowing that at any moment he might fall by an assassin's knife. But now that the plague was devastating the land, that even the Emperor had been seized with it and barely escaped death ; now

that the Imperial cause in Italy seemed on the verge of ruin, the government again appealed to Belisarius for help, grudgingly restored to him part of his property, and once more named him Commander-in-chief of the forces required for the Italian campaign. But he could not recover his long-dispersed bodyguard, and the government would neither give him a fresh army nor the funds required to collect one : he was expected to provide everything on his own account ; the war was to be made self-supporting. Yet, all this notwithstanding and oblivious of past wrongs, he set to work vigorously, and, collecting 4,000 Illyrians at his own expense in Thrace, immediately led them into Dalmatia, where he converted them into a trained and organised force. He succeeded in forwarding reinforcements and stores from this base to the blockaded town of Otranto just when the exhausted garrison was on the point of surrender, in order to secure a starting-point for the reconquest of Southern Italy. In fact, when the Goths discovered that a relieving force had contrived to slip through their lines they raised the siege and marched away to rejoin Totila's main army. Meanwhile the latter was already near Rome ; had taken Tivoli, slaughtered the inhabitants, and was now keeping watch over the Tiber to prevent supplies being conveyed up the river. Belisarius should have hastened to succour the city, and was most anxious to do so, but had neither men nor money for the attempt. Therefore he marched towards Ravenna instead, hoping that many disbanded veterans there would rally to his standard, but while successfully capturing Bologna on the way, failed to persuade old soldiers to return to the Imperial ranks. Next, the Illyrian volunteers he had brought with him, and who had received no pay, hurriedly deserted on learning that their own country was being devastated by the Huns. Meanwhile Totila had advanced

by the Flaminian Way, seizing several of the Byzantines' few remaining strongholds (545), including Spoleto, where the garrison not only surrendered to him, but joined his ranks. Thus he was enabled to cut the enemy's communications between Ravenna and Rome, and promptly laid siege to the latter city. Belisarius, although aware of the urgency of reversing the aspect of the war, and burning to make a determined attempt to relieve the ancient capital of the world, found it utterly impossible to move from Ravenna. He implored the Emperor to grant him men and money, and especially to have his bodyguard sent over to his aid, explaining the desperate state of things in Italy, where nothing could be squeezed from the disheartened and exhausted population. He then crossed over to Durazzo in Dalmatia with a small troop in order to meet the reinforcements which were finally on the road from Constantinople.

Twelve months had elapsed since he landed in Italy, yet so far he had won no real success. Rome was beleaguered by the Goths, who were absolute masters of the surrounding country, were levying taxes and gathering in the produce of the soil. The Imperial garrison within the city was very weak and badly provisioned. The citizens were already beginning to suffer cruelly from famine, and, what was still worse, the Imperial commandant Bessas and certain of his officers made a practice of supplying them with corn from the army stores at an exorbitant price, and so greatly to their own profit that they were in no hurry to arrange terms of surrender. Many of the inhabitants were so wasted by hunger that they could scarcely drag their emaciated limbs, and moved like spectres through the streets. So at last the commandant was obliged to order all non-combatants to leave the city, and many were slaughtered by the Goths as they feebly tried to escape across the Campagna.

No wonder, therefore, that Belisarius, in his natural impatience to march to Rome's relief, should have ordered a general advance the moment he received the long-expected aid from Constantinople. But fresh obstacles now arose from the lack of discipline that seemed to have become an epidemic in his army. Joannes, the leader of the newly arrived troops, had always been hostile to Belisarius, but, as he enjoyed great influence at Court in virtue of his marriage with a member of the Imperial family, it had been necessary to send him to Constantinople in order to obtain the needed succour. And now Joannes was bent on leading his force from Dalmatia to attack the Goths in Southern Italy, where they were known to be scattered and in little strength. These once disposed of, he said, it would be easier to win a victory under the walls of Rome, when he and Belisarius could simultaneously assault the enemy on both flanks, while the garrison could seize the same moment for effecting a vigorous sortie. But Belisarius, recognising the dangers of delay, wished to sail over at once to the mouth of the Tiber and make a direct advance up the river to relieve Rome, and directed Bessas to be on the alert to co-operate with him against the besiegers. But as it proved impossible to come to any agreement with Joannes the two generals finally adopted the worst of all plans, *i.e.*, of each acting on his own account. Accordingly Belisarius crossed the sea to Portus, while Joannes landed at Brindisi, entered that town after defeating the Goths, and then reduced the ancient Calabria (the district of Otranto), Apulia, and Lucania. Thence, instead of pushing on to join Belisarius, he advanced into Bruttium (the Calabria of to-day), and occupied Reggio, where, aided by the great landowners and their peasantry, he succeeded in routing the Gothic force. He thus commanded the Straits of Messina, and could inform the

Imperial government that he had reconquered Southern Italy. Evidently he had no intention of advancing to the North, in accordance with Belisarius's plan. Hence the small Gothic detachment which Totila had sent to the Campanian province was more than strong enough to keep watch on his movements.

Meanwhile Belisarius was occupying Portus with a scanty force and vainly protesting against being left unassisted. There was Ostia close to his hand, and still held by the Goths, yet he was unable to expel their small garrison owing to the weakness of his own force. Four miles off, at the Tiber's narrowest point, Totila had blocked the river with a chain and floating bridge defended by a wooden tower on either bank. Nevertheless, Belisarius was determined to relieve Rome, hoping not only to supply it with provisions, but to force his own way into the city, for the valiant leader was nowise disheartened by the numerous mischances and hindrances he had endured. He therefore despatched two sham deserters to measure the height of the towers ; then, having lashed two barges together and strengthened them with timbers, he erected a wooden tower on this foundation and raised to the top of it a small boat filled with a highly inflammable substance composed of sulphur, resin, and pitch, somewhat resembling the Greek fire of later times. Behind the two slowly moving barges came a small fleet of boats laden with corn and manned by soldiers, while other troops, both foot and horse, advanced along the banks escorting the men who were towing the barges.

Before starting Belisarius had left Isaac of Armenia as commandant at Portus, strictly charging him to guard that post at all risks and not to abandon it, even though he himself were seen to be in danger. He also gave Bessas notice of his advance and instructed him to sally

out to his support at the right moment so that the Goths might be attacked on both sides at once. Bessas, however, thinking only of his own profit, remained inert, so the Goths were able to march safely against Belisarius, who had victoriously overcome the first obstacles to his advance. For he had already broken through the chain and burnt one of the towers before the Goths came up, and immediately charging the foe drove them to flight with a loss of two hundred slain. The floating bridge was destroyed and the river-way seemed open to the corn ships, when, suddenly, fortune deserted Belisarius. For different reasons both Bessas and Isaac failed to obey their instructions, and thus ruined the whole enterprise at the very moment when Belisarius thought victory in his grasp. When news came to Portus that the Byzantines were victoriously pursuing their advance on Rome, Isaac could no longer restrain his ardour, and sallying forth with one hundred horse he crossed the Insula Sacra to Ostia and easily seized that town. Then, however, a strong force of Goths came up, who quickly routed the small body of horse, slew the greater part of them, and captured their commandant. An exaggerated version of this skirmish reached Belisarius like a bolt from the blue at the moment when his success seemed fully assured. Thereupon, for the first time in his life, he was really demoralised. Impressed with the idea that Portus had fallen into the enemy's hands, that his still beloved wife was taken captive, and that he would be attacked front and rear by the Goths, he hastily sounded the retreat. But on reaching Portus and discovering the real state of affairs he was so crushed with grief at having been thus robbed of his victory that he was prostrated with high fever and disabled for some time from continuing the campaign.

Totila, being victorious and feeling assured of further

success, then addressed these memorable words to his troops: "At the beginning of the war, 200,000 Goths were vanquished by 7,000 Byzantines; but now the 20,000 Byzantines scattered over Italy have been conquered by the feeble and despised remnants of the Goths. Things have happened in this wise, because in former times the Goths dealt unjustly with the Byzantines and were therefore chastised, whereas now that we have observed the rules of justice, God hath granted us victory in reward." Afterwards, on entering the Senate, he reproved the Romans for siding with the Imperialists who had stripped them of everything. "What evil," he cried, "was ever done ye by the Goths?" He then sent the Deacon Pelagius to Constantinople for the purpose of arranging a lasting peace, and wrote to Justinian in the following terms: "I respect thee, as a son should respect his father, and shall always remain thy trusty ally. But shouldst thou refuse to accept peace, I will destroy Rome, so that it may wreak no more harm on the Goths."

Justinian vouchsafed no reply to these threats, merely intimating that everything would be settled by Belisarius; that is to say, by the chances of war. Accordingly, all that could be done was to prepare for another campaign.

At this juncture Totila was obliged to repair to Southern Italy, where the Byzantines, being in considerable force, occupied many strong positions and made it increasingly difficult for him to obtain supplies for Rome. When preparing for his march to the South, he found it impossible to leave behind a sufficient garrison, so began to throw down the walls, with the intention of destroying the Eternal City outright. But while this truly barbarous work was in progress he received a letter from Belisarius that deeply impressed him. "Dost thou not know," wrote the general, "that to do injury to Rome is an outrage alike to her ancient glories and to posterity, an

act indeed of real profanation? Wouldst thou be remembered in history as the destroyer rather than as the saviour of the grandest and most magnificent city in the world?" According to Procopius, Totila was so affected by this remonstrance that he stopped the horrible work of demolition and started for the South, taking the senators as hostages in his train, and ordering the complete evacuation of Rome, which, as Procopius tells us, was emptied of its whole population for a time. Totila merely posted a small garrison on the Alban Hills, as though to watch from a distance the deserted city, whither he hoped to make a speedy return after defeating the Byzantines. This account may seem rather legendary, but it is a known fact that, on the one hand, Totila was unable to leave a sufficient force to hold Rome, and on the other, that the Eternal City still had so fascinating an effect on the barbarians as to make them regard it almost in the light of an inviolable sanctuary; hence its destruction must have seemed to all a crime against God and humanity. Also, it should be remembered that Totila had no wish to come to so decided a rupture with the Empire as to preclude all possibility of fresh negotiations.

However this may be, Rome was now deserted for six weeks, and left, it is said, without a single inhabitant. So Belisarius, after planting a small garrison at Portus, and routing the few Goths who marched against him from the Alban Hills, boldly entered Rome and began to rebuild the walls. Thereupon many of the fugitive citizens hurried in from the Campagna and vigorously aided the soldiers in repairing the ruined fortifications. But as no skilled workmen could be found to replace the demolished gates of the city, the open archways were closed up in great haste when it was learnt that Totila knew that Belisarius had occupied Rome and was speeding back to attack him. In fact the barbarian king made three

attempts to storm the walls, but, being always repulsed and pursued, withdrew to Tivoli. Then at last Belisarius contrived to set up new gates and sent the keys of Rome over to Constantinople. This occurred in 547, the twelfth year of the Byzantine war and the third of the second campaign.

The Goths were still very powerful in Italy. They were masters of Northern Italy, where their auxiliaries, the Franks, were still stationed ; they occupied Venice and had advanced into Central Italy which, the cities of Ravenna, Perugia, Ancona, Rome, and Spoleto excepted, was entirely in their power. But the Byzantines ruled in Southern Italy, although a considerable number of Goths was still scattered about the land, and held certain valuable strategic positions. Naturally, the possession of Rome and Ravenna was of great moral and material advantage to the Imperialists. But Belisarius's movements were paralysed by the permanent discord between himself and Joannes, and likewise by the want of reinforcements from the East. Thus for the space of two years the Byzantines did nothing but excite increased discontent among the people, to the advantage of the Goths who consequently regained various cities, and among them Rossano and Perugia. Accordingly Belisarius was thrown into such despair that his wife Antonina started off to Constantinople, hoping to be able to obtain the assistance he required through the mediation of her old patroness the Empress ; but on her arrival she found that Theodora had died on the 1st of July, 548. So, as a last resource, she prayed the Emperor to recall her husband. The request was granted, and in 549 Belisarius once more returned to Constantinople, loaded, as usual, with rich spoils of war, but with sadly diminished renown, seeing that he had achieved no important success throughout this second Italian campaign. Contrasted with the

brilliant achievements of the first period of the war, his failure seemed all the more evident. He remained at Constantinople, was always held in honour, but for ten years in succession was deprived of the chief command of the army.

However, in 559 the Huns invaded Moesia and Thrace, and not only perpetrated cruel massacres but even threatened the city of Constantinople. Thereupon Justinian, now in his seventy-seventh year, was so terror-struck that he proposed to fly from his capital, and once more appealed to his old but still glorious general. Belisarius was in his fifty-fifth year, and much shattered by the tribulations he had endured ; nevertheless he flew to arms without delay, and gathering a few of his old soldiers and a considerable force of peasant recruits, soon organised a small army ; and by fresh miracles of daring, resourcefulness, and good strategy succeeded in routing a greatly superior host who left 400 slain on the battlefield. Yet, the moment this victory had been won, Justinian was moved by a fit of childish, or rather senile jealousy, to recall him to the capital, again preferring to bribe the enemy to make terms instead of concluding an honourable peace that would have revived the former triumphs of the envied general. The people again welcomed Belisarius with the honours due to a conqueror ; but for the rest of his life he was excluded from public affairs and refused the command of the army. This emboldened his adversaries to accuse him of conspiring against the Emperor's person, so Justinian once more stripped him of all his possessions, and kept him under ignominious surveillance. But a few months later, either repenting or recognising his mistake, he restored all the general's emoluments (July, 563). In 565 the valiant Belisarius at last found rest in the grave, about nine months before the decease of the Emperor he had so faithfully served. The

legend of his having ended his life as a blind beggar sitting at a church door with an earthen plate in his hand and asking alms with the words *Date obolum Belisario*, only dates from the eleventh or twelfth century. It was unknown to his contemporaries, who scarcely alluded to the unhappiness of his last years. Most probably, as we had occasion to remark in a previous chapter, the close of the hero's life was confused with that of John of Cappadocia, who was really reduced to beggary though without loss of sight.

## CHAPTER IX

THE CONTROVERSY ON THE THREE CHAPTERS—NARSES' NEW EXPEDITION TO ITALY, DEFEAT OF TOTILA AND TEIA—FALL OF THE OSTROGOTH KINGDOM.

THE final withdrawal of Belisarius from public life marks the end, or indeed rather the collapse of Justinian's foreign policy. For now from every side the barbarians were again pressing forward. The Franks seemed the most daring and the most confident of success; while Totila's fortunes also appeared to be rapidly rising. Rome only possessed a garrison of 3,000 Imperial troops, who received next to no pay and were reduced to sore straits and seriously disaffected. They had already murdered their general, Conon, who apparently imitated Bessas in turning the public suffering to account by selling the stores of grain to fill his own purse. The present commandant of the garrison was a certain Diogenes, formerly belonging to Belisarius's bodyguard, who had successfully repulsed many of Totila's attacks. Nevertheless the latter, having contrived to seize Portus, was able to starve the city by cutting off supplies. So at last some Isaurian troopers, weary of suffering so much gratuitous hardship, betrayed Rome to the foe by opening the Porta San Paolo to them; thus the barbarian army poured in and put most of the garrison to the sword. Diogenes, however, escaped

with some of his men, while 400 more took refuge in Hadrian's Tomb (Castel St. Angelo), but being finally starved out, deserted to the barbarians (549) and were generously treated by Totila, who now feeling assured of success, wished to live on friendly terms with the Roman people. In fact, one by one, various cities, such as Rimini and Taranto for instance, surrendered to him, and even Civitavecchia and Ancona promised to open their gates unless the Imperialists soon came to their relief. Accordingly he decided to move to the South, seize the islands, and then, with his fleet commanding the sea, cut off the Imperial forces from all means of communication with the capital of the East. Crossing the straits, he landed in Sicily, and finding Messina prepared to resist marched into the interior of the island and easily occupied the rural districts.

At this juncture Justinian should have provided for the vigorous prosecution of the war, unless prepared to lose Italy altogether. Unfortunately, being already burdened with years, and more or less subject to fits of religious mania, he had become so deeply absorbed in theological studies as to neglect the most pressing necessities both of the war and the State. He aspired to be the champion of the true faith and restore the unity of the Church as well as that of the Empire. But, unluckily, the East and the West could never come to a complete agreement regarding the fundamental conception of religious supremacy. In questions of faith the Pope could recognise no authority as superior or even equal to his own, no matter what claims such authority might possess, nor what services it rendered to the Church. Justinian, on the other hand, considered his political authority to be derived neither from the people, the Senate nor the army, but directly from God ; accordingly, while granting the superiority of the spiritual over the temporal

power, he maintained that both powers were combined or coexistent in the Empire. Therefore, even in religious matters, he desired to be at the head of the Church and supreme over the priesthood as well as over all believers "Our chief concern," he wrote, "is for the true heavenly faith, and the honesty of the clergy." Accordingly he condemned heretics, condemned heterodox doctrines; denied the conclusiveness of Synodic or Papal decrees, maintaining that the only valid decrees were those emanating from the Ecumenical Council convoked by himself and whose deliberations he had sanctioned and allowed to be published. Naturally, this view of the case could not be accepted by Rome.

Constantly absorbed in questions of this kind, Justinian had been strangely excited for some time by the discovery of certain errors, or rather flaws, in the decisions of the Council of Chalcedon, and being determined to have the honour of correcting them, often withdrew to his library to study the matter, or to start heated discussions with friars and priests. The question that chiefly occupied his mind is known to the world as that of the *Three Chapters*, or the three disputed points. It was a very obscure and very intricate question, and although of no great theological value, was of some political importance to himself. The Emperor desired as much as ever to be in complete harmony with Rome; but whenever terms to such effect were agreed upon they stirred discord in the East, where, as in Egypt, there were great numbers of ardent followers of the Monophysite creed, to which the Roman Church was so fiercely opposed. The new controversy turned on the doctrines of three Eastern bishops, in which plain signs of heresy had been discovered, although the Council of Chalcedon had failed to detect them. It would seem that Theodorus Ascida, the originator of the dispute, led the Emperor to hope that, inasmuch as the three bishops

concerned had sternly opposed the Monophysite doctrine, the fact of his condemning them would be an indirect means of conciliating his Monophysite subjects without angering the Church of Rome. No sooner was Justinian convinced, and not without reason, that the three bishops had really erred, he became almost crazy on the subject, anathematised the *Three Chapters* "in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost," and invited the Monophysites to adhere to the true doctrine as set forth by himself (544 and 551). But this time he was totally deceived. His decree won him no support from the Monophysites, and had the effect instead of rousing heated opposition in the West, where it was regarded as an offence not only against the authority of the Council of Chalcedon (451), but likewise against that of the Pope. Besides, seeing that the three prelates condemned by the Imperial decree had been not only revered in Chalcedon, but had been dead and buried a hundred years, why disturb their ashes after so long a time? The dispute was inopportune, to say the least, and of no practical import. Nevertheless Justinian gave his whole mind to it, and refused to withdraw a single step.

The person who suffered most was Pope Vigilius, who had gained his elevation to St. Peter's Chair by means of Theodora's intrigues, and being summoned over to Constantinople, found himself between two fires there. By condemning the *Three Chapters* he would stir a hornet's nest in the West; by failing to condemn them he would be in conflict with the Emperor. He finally yielded to the latter's will, and published a solemn condemnation of the *Three Chapters* in 548. But on beholding the storm this stirred against him in the West, and of which Justinian took no heed, he changed his mind, and openly opposed the Emperor. He not only refused to take part in the Ecumenical Council convoked at his own sug-

gestion, but protested against it (553). As might have expected, the Council issued an explicit condemnation of the *Three Chapters*, and consequently riots ensued, and the Pope, after being brutally treated and threatened with death, was banished to an island in the Sea of Marmora. Six months afterwards, worn out by all the calamities he had endured, burdened with years, and tormented with the stone, he finally capitulated, and on the 23rd of February, 554, anathematised the *Three Chapters*. Then he was permitted to return to Italy, but was only able to reach Sicily, and died there on the 7th of January, 555.

Nevertheless, the power of the Church and of the Papal authority was so great in that age that even during the above-described period of weakness, strife and violent oppression, it contrived to obtain from the Empire many new and notable concessions; for the year 554 witnessed the publication of the Pragmatic Sanction, which, by finally sanctioning the establishment of Justinian's Code in Italy, gave new and wider authority to the clergy, even in temporal affairs. Judges were to be elected by the bishops and leading citizens; weights and measures were to be regulated according to the orders of the bishops and Senate. All this, in addition to many other earlier concessions. In 546 it had been decreed that clerics could only be tried by ecclesiastical tribunals. In many cases appeal could be made to the bishop from the verdict of common courts of law; and thus the bishop became a species of popular tribune, and was likewise charged with the superintendence of the public granaries, public buildings, and aqueducts. Undoubtedly these privileges were granted to the bishops simply because they were officials in the pay of the Empire. But the Church accepted them without discussion, and, as the Imperial authority began to decline and the spiritual

independence of the Church could be more widely asserted, she began to display equal independence even in the exercise of the temporal powers which had been conferred upon her. For, without reflecting on the natural consequences of the act, the Empire had provided the Church with weapons to be turned against itself. Now the Pragmatic Sanction, which seals, as it were, all these numerous concessions, was issued by Justinian for the expressly stated purpose of following the advice of Pope Vigilius, whom he had so cruelly humiliated and ill-treated !

Certainly Justinian had reason to rejoice over his triumph with regard to the *Three Chapters*, inasmuch as he had contrived to make the Pope condemn them ; but he was still far from the goal he wished to reach, for he had not only failed to win over a single Monophysite to his side, but had alienated more deeply the affection of the Italian people. Besides, the religious strife he had provoked clearly proved to all that the Pope could have no freedom of action under Byzantine rule. In fact, Vigilius had endured six years' detention in Constantinople, where the Patriarch was his foe, and where the Emperor had done him violence and treated him as a dependent of his own.

It is certain that the conduct of Vigilius was far from honourable, and caused serious injury to the Church. Indeed, for about half a century after his time she was sunk in obscurity and decay, until Gregory the Great appeared to renew her prestige. But Justinian's course throughout the controversy was highly unwise, and contributed to hasten the end of the Byzantine power in Italy and the establishment of the Longobard rule. It is true that he was endeavouring to reconstitute the unity of the Empire, while the Popes, on the contrary, sought to establish the unity and universal authority of the

Catholic Church; but neither design could be fully carried out, since, both in politics and religion, the East was destined to separate from the West.

For some time past the studious Justinian had been so deeply absorbed in theological subtleties that for their sake he would have abandoned even the war of Italian conquest which he had begun with so much ardour, but that had already lasted much longer than he expected, cost great bloodshed, and entailed terrible ruin on the miserable inhabitants of the land. But from all quarters he was earnestly pressed to carry out his purpose of restoring the supremacy of the Empire, and many Italians had come over to Constantinople with petitions to that effect. The principal difficulty to be solved at that juncture was where to find a general really fitted to assume the full command that was indispensable to the success of the war. As recent experience had shown, Belisarius was no longer equal to the task. Hence his choice fell on his nephew Germanus, who, as the husband of Theodoric's grand-daughter, the widow of Witigis, seemed adapted to attract some adherents, even from the ranks of the Goths. Besides having wealth of his own, he was privileged to draw on the Imperial treasury for the expenses of the war. Accordingly volunteers flocked to his standard from all parts, including a certain proportion of Goths. But just when Germanus had collected a considerable force and was ready to march, sudden death fell upon him. Consequently his army remained in winter quarters near Salona (550–551).

Meanwhile Totila was besieging Ancona, a port of great value to the Imperialists, especially in case they should decide to make a descent on Central Italy from Dalmatia. For this reason Joannes, the daring and ambitious general, who knew Italy well and was versed in fighting the Goths, resolved, in spite of contrary

orders, to cross over from Dalmatia and attempt to relieve the city by a naval attack. Therefore, in concert with Valerian, who was stationed at Ravenna, their joint fleets came in contact, off Sinigaglia, with the numerous warships of the Goths. But as usual the latter were incapable of withstanding the Byzantines by sea; their fleet was entirely destroyed, and the Imperial ships had free command of the Adriatic. The Goths then raised the siege of Ancona and withdrew to Osimo. Totila was induced to propose fresh terms of peace, offering to give up Dalmatia and Sicily, and likewise to pay tribute-money to the Empire and recognise its suzerainty. This would be the best means, he declared, of preventing the Franks from reaping the whole advantage of the war, seeing that they still held several important positions in North Italy. But the time for negotiations was passed, since Justinian had already nominated Narses to the post of Commander-in-chief (551).

This celebrated eunuch was a bent, undersized man, and about seventy-three years old. Up to the age of sixty he had been constantly employed in civil affairs, and had gained much renown by his administrative skill. He was a fervent Catholic, very shrewd, ex- extremely ambitious, and was supposed to be under the direct protection of the Virgin, for whom he professed a special devotion. When Justinian, with marvellous insight, first raised him to the rank of a general, this clever civilian was already sixty years of age, and had never had an opportunity of showing the fine military gifts he was afterwards proved to possess, and which none—save the Emperor—could have divined. Being despatched to Italy, while Belisarius was in command there, he had been prevented from then displaying his worth by the fact that being speedily at odds with his Commander-in-chief, he had only compromised the result of the war. Never-

theless, he had acquired a singular ascendancy over his fellow-officers, as well as over the soldiery, and this naturally strengthened the high opinion of him that the Emperor had instinctively conceived. Accordingly he again despatched him to Italy as Commander-in-chief, to restore the fortunes of the war and of the Empire. As Narses not only possessed a large fortune, but knew how to extract money from the State, his first care was to collect a powerful army, since the force already organised in Dalmatia seemed altogether insufficient for his purpose. He therefore caused troops to be levied at Constantinople, in Thrace and in Illyria. He likewise gathered 2,500 Longobards, who brought 3,000 additional men-at-arms in their train, and were led by Audoin, whose son Alboin overran Italy with his tribe sixteen years later on. Narses also enrolled 3,000 Heruli, and had Gepidæ, Huns, and even Persians under his command. With this army he marched into Dalmatia to join the force already assembled there, in order to start for Italy as soon as the entire host was properly organised and drilled.

Although the Imperials were now in command of the Adriatic, they had no ships suited for the transport of a numerous army. Also grave anxiety was felt as to the risk of exposing vessels laden with men and munitions of war to possible storms or sudden attacks from the foe. So Narses decided on advancing by land, round the coast, with his provision-ships, as a naval escort, hugging the land and ready to serve in ferrying the troops across the wide streams of the Tagliamento, Isonzo, and Brenta. He followed a route that enabled him to avoid fortified places and towns occupied by the Franks. Verona, which was held by the Goths under the valiant Teia, was fortunately at a long distance from his line of march. So the Imperial army reached Ravenna unmolested, next pushed on to Rimini, and after defeating some of the

garrison who sallied out against them, and killing their leader, proceeded southwards by the Flaminian Way. But they quitted this road at the point where it turns away from the sea, and, running up into the hills, crosses the Apennine pass called the Furlo, or Pietra Pertusa. For this pass being, as has been said, a species of natural fortified tunnel, and held at the time by the Goths, would have been extremely difficult to force. Narses, therefore, avoided it by continuing his march along the shore, and then turning inland, regained the Flaminian Way, beyond the Furlo Pass. After crossing the mountains, he encamped on a wide plain, midway between Scheggia and Tadino, which stand about fifteen miles apart. On this plain his first important battle was fought.

Totila was stationed near Rome at the time, awaiting the arrival of Teia's army. On his being joined by the greater part of that force, the united armies advanced against the foe, although aware that the Imperialists greatly overnumbered them. After reconnoitring the ground, Narses posted fifty men on a slight eminence that he regarded as the best strategic point of the field. In fact, his handful of men held the hill throughout the day, and with an heroic valour worthy of ancient Romans, drove back the often repeated charges of the Gothic cavalry. The general also arranged that his barbarian contingent, in whom he had small confidence, should be placed in the centre of the army, dismounted, and made to fight on foot, to diminish the chance of panic or treachery driving them to flight. The Romans were stationed on either flank, and each of the two wings comprised 4,000 archers, who, contrary to the rule adopted by Belisarius, were also dismounted. The left wing was supported by 500 horse, ranged in extended order in the direction of the hill that, as we have seen, was considered to be the key of the position. Another body

of horse, 1,000 strong, was kept in reserve, ready to meet emergencies.

Narses' tactics were to await attack from the enemy, who, noting the weakness of his centre, would certainly make a most determined effort to pierce it, and push forward far enough to be easily trapped between his two wings.

The opening of the struggle was delayed for some time, because Totila was waiting for further reinforcements from Teia, but directly the expected 2,000 appeared the battle began. The Imperial archers did great execution on the Goths, while the Heruli and Longobards, after a moment of hesitation, attacked with so much vigour that the enemy took flight. Even the Gothic cavalry, regarded by Totila as the main strength of his army, finally fled the field at such headlong speed that many of his infantry were trampled to death by the horses' hoofs. He, too, being mortally wounded, was forced to retire, and expired in a hovel at Caprae (the modern Caprara), a village fifteen miles from the battlefield, between Gubbio and Tadino (552).

After this victory the barbarians in the Imperial service, and more particularly the undisciplined Longobards, committed every kind of excess, sacking and burning the peasants' houses, outraging women, and rousing such general disgust, that even the stern, unmerciful Narses saw the necessity of getting rid of the Longobards. Therefore, by a large grant of money, he induced the fierce throng to turn homewards over the Julian Alps, escorted by Valerian. The latter proposed to lay siege to Verona on his way back ; but his plan was opposed by the Franks, who occupied many places in the eastern part of the region beyond the river Pò, and preferred Goths to Imperialists, inasmuch as the former were much weaker and already hard pressed in Southern

Italy. Besides, as the Goths had given the Franks permission to occupy the position they now held in Italy, the latter may have judged it an act of good and loyal policy to favour the former's cause—so long, at least, as their own interests suggested no other course. Therefore Valerian, being unwilling to provoke a second war while the first was still unfinished, remained stationary, and merely sought to prevent the Goths, who were gathering in greater strength in Northern Italy, from marching towards Rome to their comrades' assistance, now that fresh warfare seemed certain in the South. After the defeat and death of Totila, they had flocked to Pavia, which became one of their principal centres, since Ravenna had been lost, and unanimously proclaimed the valiant Teia as their king. This new ruler immediately tried to secure the still doubtful friendship of the Franks, but could gain nothing save a promise of neutrality, and that only in return for the cession of the royal treasure-hoard at Pavia. It naturally suited the Franks to adopt the attitude of spectators and quietly wait until the rival powers were nearly exhausted, to then attack the victor on their own account.

Meanwhile the cities of Central Italy were rapidly succumbing to the Byzantines. Narni, Spoleto, Perugia, and even the garrison of Pietra Pertusa, all yielded in turn. Narses was already marching on Rome, where the Gothic garrison was massed near Hadrian's Mausoleum, which Totila had fortified. Their force was too small to attempt the defence of the city walls, but neither were the Imperialists strong enough to invest the whole circuit. Accordingly another series of partial assaults and partial repulses was carried on, until one of Narses' captains contrived to scale a neglected rampart, and opened the gates to his comrades. The Goths took to flight as the Imperialist host poured in, and the defenders of Hadrian's

Tomb soon surrendered. Once more the keys of Rome were despatched to Justinian—of Rome, the unconquerable, that, during this Emperor's reign, was five times captured, five times delivered!

This event was followed by a fresh period of slaughter. Many senators still held captive in Southern Italy were now put to death. Even Teia stained his glorious renown by ordering the murder of three hundred young Romans, ostensibly chosen to serve as his pages, but really held as hostages. The truth was that the Goths, being reduced to a scattered remnant, were wild with despair; accordingly their worst passions were now vented on wretched Italy, which seemed well-nigh extinct. Some of the Goths in Pavia flew to join with the Franks farther north; those in the South commanded by Aligern, brother of Totila, shut themselves up in Cumæ, where another portion of their State treasure was stored. So Narses quickly sent a detachment of his army to attempt the capture of this hoard, as well as of the town. Other detachments were marched into Tuscany to prevent Teia from advancing thence to join Aligern and other leaders in the south. But the valiant barbarian evaded his foes, crossed the Apennines, and pushed on to the south, where the Goths were again in great force. Accordingly, another pitched battle was required. Narses hastened forward to catch Teia before the latter could effect a junction with Aligern, and came up with him near Naples, at Nocera, on the Sarno. The Gothic king was entrenched there, with the heights of St. Angelo protecting his rear, and with his fleet at hand to provision his camp. But his fleet suddenly played him false by deserting to the Byzantines, whereupon he withdrew to another position under the cliffs of Monte Lettere (Lactarius), a ridge of the St. Angelo range. But scarcity of provisions made a long halt there impossible, and he therefore decided

to give battle. His troops charged the foe with such irresistible dash that the latter had no time to form in regular order, and was driven to fight in separate bands. Teia fought heroically at the head of his force. All the Imperialists made him their target, so that his great shield bristled with the numerous arrows fixed in it. From time to time these missiles made it so unbearably heavy that he was obliged to throw it to an attendant, and take a fresh buckler. But at last, while making this exchange, his body was uncovered for a moment, and he fell, mortally wounded in the chest. Thereupon his enemies cut off his head, fixed it on a spear, and carried it round the camp in view of both armies. The Goths continued the struggle for two days longer, but then surrendered on condition of being allowed to depart unharmed with all their portable property, and on promising to fight no more against the Empire. Accordingly many of them crossed the Alps, and became mixed with other tribes, while a considerable number remained scattered about Italy, hoping to be left unnoticed. Others who had refused the offered terms contrived to join the Franks, and did their best to urge the latter to make war on the Byzantines, who, having routed the Goths, would assuredly hasten, so they said, to vanquish the Franks, and drive them from the country. Finally certain of the Gothic captains elected to shut themselves up in fortified cities, and assume the defensive on their own account. This plan was adopted by the Gothic garrison of Crema, by the thousand men who took refuge in Pavia, and by different bands in other cities; but, sooner or later, all were compelled to yield to the Byzantines. The Gothic dominion in Italy was now broken up and received its deathblow when the hero Teia fell. After some feeble efforts to revive here and there, it disappears altogether from history.

## CHAPTER X

DEATH OF JUSTINIAN AND DEATH OF BELISARIUS—THE EMPIRE IS PLUNGED IN FRESH DIFFICULTIES—NARSES IS RECALLED TO CONSTANTINOPLE BUT REFUSES TO OBEY THE SUMMONS.

At this moment the Franks could have freely invaded Italy from Gaul; but their King, Theudebald, had no heart for daring enterprise. He merely gave permission to two Alamannic brothers, a pair of tribal chieftains under his suzerainty, to risk the passage of the Alps on their own account, with an army of 75,000 men. Were they victorious, Italy would be annexed to his kingdom; if defeated, he could deny all responsibility for their acts. The two brothers advanced in spirited fashion, counting, in any case, on winning much spoil and marching back again laden with booty. But they speedily discovered that Italy was so thoroughly devastated already, that although it were easy enough to complete its ruin, no shred of treasure remained to be plundered. On the contrary, the land was so utterly laid waste that no army could find means of support there without having supplies from abroad.

On the other hand, Narses had now to contend with the remnant of the Goths shut in the fortified towns, and also with the Franco-Alaman army, which was of considerable strength, and if favoured by fortune or by dragging on the war, might receive reinforcements from

Gaul. He therefore left a force to continue the blockade of Cumæ, where Aligern seemed determined to make an obstinate defence, and led his main army into Tuscany against the cities held by the Goths. All those towns readily surrendered, with the exception of Lucca, which stubbornly held out in the hope of being relieved by the Franco-Alamans, who were then boldly pursuing their advance. In fact, the Byzantines whom Narses had sent towards Parma, either to meet them in battle, or at least to check their progress, were worsted by them and obliged to retreat upon Faenza, leaving the road to Tuscany open to the Franks. This reverse naturally caused great alarm among the Imperial force besieging Lucca, since they feared to be caught between two fires, and simultaneously attacked by the Franks on one side and a sortie from the town on the other. Nevertheless Narses behaved with such admirable firmness, that he not only revived the courage of his troops, but induced the city to open its gates. Even Aligern, the defender of Cumæ, became convinced of the necessity of surrendering either to the Empire or to the Franco-Alamans, who, in true barbarian style, were sacking and destroying everything in their way; so he decided to go in person to Classis and have speech with Narses, who had now advanced to Ravenna. There the Goth not only made submission, but—although the brother of Totila—became a faithful soldier of the Empire, and from that time forth fought valiantly in its cause (553).

The Franco-Alamans alone were still unconquered and rapidly marching southwards, but a few hundred of Narses' troopers attacked and routed 2,000 of these barbarians in the neighbourhood of Ravenna. Then, noting that the invaders only ravaged the country as they streamed on and shirked giving battle, Narses withdrew to quarters near Rome.

The barbarian host had split in two after crossing the Apennines; one half, under the command of Butilin (called Buccellino by the Italians), pushing on to Bruttium by Campania and Lucania; while the other, under Leuthar, advanced through Apulia and ancient Calabria down to Otranto. But discord soon arose between the brothers. Butilin was resolved to continue the campaign; Leuthar, on the contrary, wished to retire to his own land with all his prisoners and spoil. So he turned to the north, but being attacked by the Byzantines at Pesaro, all his prisoners made their escape and his booty was captured by the foe. Finally reaching Venetia, pestilence assailed his ranks, and he and the greater part of his force succumbed to the disease. Butilin's fate was little different. Advancing through an already wasted land, which Narses had caused to be ravaged afresh in order to prevent him from finding any means of sustenance, the barbarian chief was obliged to feed his army on grapes, whereupon all suffered so severely from dysentery that he was driven to retreat. On reaching the banks of the Volturno, near Capua, with 30,000 men, and learning that the Byzantines were advancing against him with only 18,000, he took up a strong position, with the river protecting his rear, and barricaded his camp with heavy waggons. His opponent, Narses, employed his usual plan of having very strong flanking columns and arranging that the centre should give way so as to entice the enemy to charge in wedge-like formation and easily trap it between his wings. Nevertheless it proved to be a long and fiercely contested fight, and we must not forget to note that the prowess of Aligern helped to decide the victory of the Imperial army. The Franco-Alamans were totally destroyed and their leader Butilin perished in the field (554). So that devastating horde having passed like a meteor, Narses marched back to Rome loaded with

spoil. Only one fortified place now remained in the hands of the foe. This was a town fifty miles from Naples, named Campsa by some authorities, Conza by others, garrisoned by 7,000 Goths. But they, too, surrendered at last; their lives were spared, and as they were sent over to Constantinople probably entered the Imperial service.

Thus the twenty years' Greco-Gothic war came to an end, after having reduced Italy to the last extremity of ruin. The Ostrogoth kingdom, which had endured for sixty-four years, was now finally shattered, and the Ostrogoths ceased to exist as a nation, and disappeared—like the Vandals—as completely as though they had been a mere horde of adventurers. Some of them, as we have seen, crossed the Alps and repaired to the East; while others stayed in Italy, either fighting independently or in junction with the Franks. It is certain that throughout the ensuing period of fourteen years, during which Narses retained the chief command in Italy, he had many serious encounters both with Franks and Goths, but unfortunately we have no authentic details of these fights. The destruction of the Alamannic brethren and their hosts naturally roused the wrath of the Franks, who were still occupying a few of the North Italian towns, and their anger increased when fugitive Goths came pouring into their camps, full of fury and rancour and thirsting for vengeance on the Byzantines. It is a recorded fact that, in 555, the Franks defeated a Roman army, but the latter afterwards avenged this reverse by driving the barbarians out of Italy (Muratori, "Annali," viii. 302). Paulus Diaconus alludes to another encounter of a later date, in which a Frankish general was slain, and a Gothic Count was taken and sent prisoner to Constantinople. Other fights are recorded to have taken place in 563 and 565, and always to the advantage of the Imperialists. In short,

it may be taken for granted that at the close of the Gothic war the Franks not only threatened to make war but actually started a fresh campaign, which might have assumed dangerous proportions had they not been harassed—as was frequently the case—by internal dissensions which for some time prevented them from crossing the Alps in force. Thus, although there were some serious skirmishes with the Franks already settled in Italy, these barbarians were finally compelled to leave the country and return to their native land.

Thereupon Narses, at the head of his army, formally assumed the government of the whole peninsula, with the title of Patrician and Master of the Soldiery. He never bore the title of Exarch (as erroneously stated by some writers), for that title only makes its official appearance in Italy at a later date. The Pragmatic Sanction recognised the validity of all edicts issued by the earlier Gothic kings, but excluded those of Totila and Teia, because those two sovereigns were held to be tyrants instead of kings, seeing that Constantinople had never recognised their election to the throne. Accordingly all their laws and regulations were annulled, especially those which were to the advantage of the people, peasantry and petty proprietors whom the Goths had sought to conciliate ; while, on the other hand, all enactments of the Roman Courts—generally favourable to owners of large estates—were now put in force. Besides this, the Pragmatic Sanction maintained —at least in theory—the complete separation of the military and civil powers, so that Italy still possessed a Prætorian Prefect. Narses, however, was a general, had reconquered Italy at the head of his army, and continued to rule and defend the country by the same means. Therefore, in spite of opposing theories, both powers were concentrated in his person, so that he virtually resembled a military dictator. For the same reason, the Dukes

scattered over the provinces as his subordinates, together with the Tribunes subordinated to the Dukes, also combined both civil and military functions. This state of things produced uncertainty and disorder. Laws should have been carried out for the thorough reorganisation of the country, in order to give it some relief after all the cruel calamities it had endured for so long. But instead of this, it was necessary that Italy should furnish the means for the maintenance of a huge army, since Justinian had no money to send, and was more absorbed than ever in his theological studies. Hence there was a continued drain upon the already exhausted resources of the nation.

All this went on while the general discontent was already intensified by religious strife. On the death of Vigilius—the Pope who was so cruelly ill-used at Constantinople—the Emperor's old favourite, Pelagius, had been raised to the Papal throne. He wavered for a time regarding the question of the *Three Chapters*, but ended by condemning them, while feigning submission to the views of the Council of Chalcedon. This dubious conduct instantly evoked indignant protests from Italian bishops and clergy, especially in the north, where certain prelates positively charged Pelagius with having compassed the death of Vigilius in order to become his successor. The general resentment reached the hottest pitch when Narses, in pursuance of the Eastern theory of the Church being necessarily subordinate to the Empire, arrested several of the more turbulent bishops and sent them to Constantinople to be punished.

All public works were abandoned ; city walls, houses, churches, and aqueducts were allowed to fall into ruin, although some of the Italian cities, Milan included, had been totally destroyed during the war. The roads were left unrepaired, rivers unbanked, so that the land was flooded and malarious fevers spread. Finally, a mortal plague

broke out that carried off its victims within three days, and wrought the greatest havoc in Northern Italy. There, says Paulus Diaconus, farms and houses lay deserted, and neglected flocks wandered through the fields. Ungathered grain rotted on the ground, grapes withered on already leafless vines. The moment any case of plague occurred every one fled from the cities. Sons left the bodies of their fathers unburied, and pitiless parents deserted their sick children. If any one tried to inter these victims, he caught the plague and was left unburied in his turn. It was impossible to calculate the number of the dead; no eyes were equal to the task: *visum oculorum superabant cadavera mortuorum* (ii. 4).

Such was the condition into which Justinian allowed the Empire to fall! It cannot be said that all the above-mentioned woes were direct results of his policy; but, more or less, they were certainly its indirect consequences. There is no doubt that he was guided by various ideas which, although sometimes unpractical, were always lofty, and had a great influence on the history of the world. But although, as we have frequently said, he had a marvellous faculty of discovering persons fitted to give effect to his ideas, his bad administration, ever lavish expenditure, and the heavy tributes customarily paid to barbarians, whenever it was inconvenient to quiet them by the sword, together with unceasing wars, had lamentably exhausted the strength of an Empire where agriculture had sadly declined, and neither trade nor industry flourished. All this, combined with the general corruption of the Imperial world and its Court, exercised a malignant influence from which Justinian could not always escape, and which incapacitated him from accomplishing any enduring political reform.

In an Empire composed of so many different countries, surrounded by so many foes, incapable of having any

true national feeling—owing to its corruption—and without any high standard of morality, there was always the danger that some fortunate and powerful general might successfully revolt and establish on his own account a separate and independent State ; or that some great Court official should conspire either to the hurt of his colleagues or against the Emperor himself, for the purpose of personal aggrandisement. Accordingly all were rivals at war with one another, and this or that grandee was always rising rapidly to power or being rapidly overthrown, just as Belisarius had been disgraced, in spite of his well-proved fidelity and the great and repeated services he had rendered to the Empire. Also, of late years, in addition to other causes of evil, Justinian had grown old and had sorely neglected the government of his Empire ; therefore it is easy to understand why public affairs should have reached so calamitous a point. Nevertheless, he had certainly achieved some great results, at least for the moment, though they could scarcely prove permanent. The Persians had been repulsed ; the Vandals and Ostrogoths destroyed ; Romanism had won a splendid victory over Germanism ; Africa and Italy were reconquered. This clearly showed that the Empire still contained great vitality—enough, in fact, to keep it alive for eight centuries longer—although continually surrounded by new perils. The Greco-Latin civilisation must have been truly prodigious, seeing that even during its decline it was able to gather and assimilate so many diverse elements, and produce, in the midst of the greatest disorder, an immense series of skilled administrators, of great and glorious generals capable of defending the State with brain and sword.

But on the death of Justinian it was soon seen that the dangers to which we have alluded were bound to become more formidable. On one side Persia, the Empire's

constant foe, was again threatening invasion; on the other, the Germanic tribes were gaining fresh energy, chiefly owing to the rapid development of the Frankish power. At the same time the Slavonians were thronging towards the west, while the Finnish, Mongolian, and Tartar tribes, destined to work another great change in the world, were likewise advancing from Asia. It was highly necessary that Justinian should have been succeeded by a man of equal or greater capacity; but, as we shall see, the new Emperor was precisely the reverse.

Italy was the part of the Empire that suffered most at this time. Shattered and exhausted by a lengthy war, without hope of assistance from any quarter, oppressed by Narses, whose unpaid soldiers were daily melting away, the country was deprived of means of defence exactly when the barbarians were regaining strength and threatening to advance. The overthrow of the Ostrogoth kingdom, which had stretched as far as Noricum and Pannonia, left Italy unprotected precisely on the border where barbarian tribes had always sought a passage and were soon to find one again.

This was the moment when Justinian was succeeded by his nephew Justin II., whose mother, Vigilantia, was a niece of Theodoric. The new Emperor quickly declared his intention of making considerable retrenchments, which naturally implied a radical change of policy. In fact, he renounced great wars and stopped the subsidies hitherto paid to the barbarians; whereupon the latter once more rose in arms against the Empire, which had neither enough men nor funds for the defence of its borders. Narses suffered most under the new *régime*, since he was reduced to impotence at the moment when preparations should have been made for strengthening the threatened frontiers, and he could hope for no assistance from Italy. Indeed, a deputation of Roman nobles had just gone to

Constantinople to complain to the Emperor of the insupportable tyranny of his general Narses, who had reduced Italy to such a plight that any other government would be preferable to his. Therefore, the envoys added, unless some remedy were speedily applied, the Italians would be compelled to throw themselves into the arms of the barbarians, who would assuredly treat them more leniently. In truth, things were now at such a pass that, seeing the impossibility of inducing the aged Narses, who had always done as he chose, to change his methods, the government finally recalled him to the East in 567, and appointed a successor who was ordered off to Italy at once.

This affair gave birth to a legend which, although unrecorded by Byzantine writers, was widely circulated in Italy at the time, and is also told by Paulus Diaconus. According to this tale Narses refused to obey the order of recall, whereupon the Empress Sophia is supposed to have cried, "I know what to do with the old eunuch. He shall be confined to his proper place in the women's quarters, and forced to spin wool with the maids." On receiving this insulting message, Narses is said to have replied, "Then I shall spin such a coil for the Empress as she will never unravel so long as she lives." By way of carrying out this threat, Narses is then supposed to have revenged himself by summoning the Longobards into Italy and sending ambassadors laden with the finest fruit of the land, the better to tempt them to invade it. So the Longobards were persuaded to accept the invitation, and therefore poured down from the Alps in 568. Meanwhile Narses had retired to Naples, still in high wrath, and presently recognised what a blunder he had made. Accordingly, when Pope John III. succeeded to Pelagius in 561, the general besought the new Pontiff to undertake the defence of Italy, hastened back to Rome, and suddenly died there.

The legendary character of this tale is too plain to need demonstration. As we have previously observed, many of the Longobards had already visited Italy, and having fought there under Narses, needed no gifts of fruit to be assured of the fertility of the soil. Besides, if the supposed gifts were despatched to them from Naples, one may easily imagine in what condition they arrived. The Longobards were moved to cross the Alps by far stronger motives than the capricious spite of any one man, although it is by no means improbable that Narses' wrath may have paved the way for their invasion by allowing everything to go to ruin and making no preparations for defence.

# BOOK III

## *THE LONGOBARDS*

## CHAPTER I

THE LONGOBARDS' WAR WITH THE GEPIDÆ—THEIR INVASION OF ITALY, AND CONQUESTS THERE—THE DEATH OF ALBOIN—ELECTION AND DEATH OF CLEPH—INTERREGNUM—THE DUKES—APPORTIONMENT OF THE LAND—THE POPE'S FIRST APPEAL TO THE FRANKS FOR HELP (580)

The Langobards, or Longobards as they were afterwards called, whose name was owed, according to their historian, Paulus Diaconus, to the great length of their beards, are mentioned by Velleius Paterculus as being the fiercest of all the fierce German tribes. At that time they dwelt near the Elbe. Tacitus speaks of them at a later date, and praises their courage. They would seem to have shared in the great Barbarian advance to the south, and were repulsed by Marcus Aurelius during the Marcomannic war (178-79). For the three following centuries their name was unheard ; but there is reason to believe that they were included among the tribes under the rule of the Huns during Attila's reign, but separated from

them when the Hunnish kingdom was broken up. But, in point of fact, we know very little regarding their origin. Paulus Diaconus gives a lengthy account of it, consisting of a string of legends, from which no genuine historic information can be gleaned. He maintains that the Longobards were of Scandinavian origin. But their native land becoming too narrow for their needs, one-third of the tribe migrated to the south, under the guidance of two brothers named Ibor and Aio, of the Gungingi or Gugingi house. Agilmund, son of Aio, became their first king, and was succeeded by six others of the same family, the last of the six being Tato, who fought and vanquished the Heruli, about the year 508. Two more kings succeeded to Tato. The second of these was Waltari, under whom Audoin became all-powerful and sent a contingent to Narses' aid during the latter's second Italian campaign. Audoin was the father of Alboin, with whom legend comes to an end and real history begins.

By that time the Longobards had invaded the land of the Rugi across the Danube ; while Pannonia, on the other side, was inhabited by the Gepidæ, who had been long their bitterest foes. Their reciprocal enmity waxed fiercer when the Heruli, on being completely routed by the Longobards, united with the Gepidæ who, thus reinforced, profited by the war then raging between Totila and the Byzantines, to occupy other territories belonging to the Empire. Thereupon, Justinian, following the traditional policy of the East, stirred the Longobards against them, and in 554 the youthful Alboin first proved his valour by taking the field against them, and killed in single combat Thorismund, the son of Thorisind, their king. Another legend tells us that the latter chivalrously invited Alboin to a banquet, and then arrayed him in the armour of his slaughtered son. Nevertheless they nearly came to blows. Remembering that Thorismund had died

by Alboin's hand, the king of the Gepidæ heaved a deep sigh, whereupon another of his sons, making allusion to the linen leg-bands or putties worn by the Longobards, jeeringly said to them, "You look like white-legged mares." Instantly a Longobard made retort, "Go to the Asfeld battle-ground, and thou wilt learn how these mares kick, by the sight of thy brother's bones scattered on the soil like those of a broken-down colt." Thereupon every sword would have flashed forth, says the legend, but for the prompt action of the king, who, invoking the sacred laws of hospitality, girt Alboin with Thorismund's weapons. Whatever we may think of this tale, it is certain that Alboin returned home in triumph, and succeeded his father on the Longobard throne towards the year 565.

He was then a strong, daring, ambitious youth, and apparently somewhat favoured by the Empire. But the Gepidæ were no less valiant than the Longobards, and superior to them in number, so, as Thorismund's death could not be forgotten, the two nations seemed doomed to engage in a war of extermination. Luckily for the Longobards, however, a new tribe called the Avars now appeared upon the scene. These were of the same race as the Huns, and from the beginning of the fifth century had been settled on the shores of the Caspian Sea. Then, with the approval of Justinian, who wished to use them for his own ends, these Avars had migrated to the lower region of the Danube, led by a chief bearing the title of Chagan (Khan), and formed a powerful kingdom, helped by subsidies from the Emperor. Thus the Longobards, Gepidæ, and Avars were near neighbours in a region so wasted by continual warfare that the struggle to secure bare subsistence rendered them all equally restless and aggressive. It was at this moment that Justin suddenly decided to withdraw his accustomed subsidy to the Avars, proudly declaring

that the Empire should not stoop to pay tribute to Barbarians. Alboin promptly turned this opportunity to account by inviting the Avars to join with him in attacking the Gepidæ. "That tribe once destroyed," he said, "we shall be more at ease in this ravaged land, and can soon seize other territories from the Empire."

It seems evident that Alboin was already planning a descent upon Italy, and wished first to secure his rear by crushing the Gepidæ; otherwise it would be difficult to understand the terms of the bargain then made with the Avars. For the Longobards promised them one-half of the spoil taken from the Gepidæ, a third of their cattle, and the whole of the conquered territory. Also, when the Longobards had marched away, the Avars were to have the right of occupying and owning their lands, unless they came back to resume possession of them. So the Gepidæ were confronted by two enemies at once. It is true they had a right to expect assistance from the Emperor; but he adhered to the usual Eastern policy of leaving the Barbarians to exterminate one another, and remained an almost passive spectator; merely giving them to understand that his forces would keep the Avars in check. Thereupon the Gepidæ made a very furious attack upon the Longobards, hoping first to crush them and then the Avars. But they were met by Alboin, who suddenly marched his army against them, routed them, slew their king, Cunimund, with his own hand, and cutting off his head, had the skull converted into a goblet to be used at state banquets, according to barbarian custom. As we shall presently see, he paid dearly for this savage act. But, for the moment, his victory was complete. It is said that 40,000 Gepidæ were slain, and at any rate history mentions the tribe no more. Enormous spoil was carried off, and a very large number of prisoners, who either took service in the conqueror's army or were reduced to

slavery. Cunimund's daughter, Rosamund, was one of the captives, and Alboin was so fascinated by the maiden's charms that he determined to marry her, in spite of her horrified repugnance from a union with her father's murderer. So the marriage was celebrated without delay, although Alboin's first wife, Hlotsuintha, daughter of Hlotocar, king of the Franks, had barely expired. After this the bridegroom undertook the invasion of Italy.

He must have been aware of the defenceless state of that country. Many important cities were garrisoned by a mere handful of men, while others had barely enough to hold the walls ; Pavia alone was prepared to offer a stubborn defence. The exhausted and disaffected inhabitants were not likely to support the Byzantines, who were much detested, even by the clergy. As for the last remnants of the Goths scattered about Italy, they were, of course, ready to join the first horde that should cross the Alps. Narses, already recalled and stripped of his command, was lingering in retirement at Naples, and possibly rejoicing over the ruin that had followed his own overthrow. His successor, Longinus, had already arrived, but with so small a force that he was compelled to seek refuge in Ravenna. Accordingly, the gates of Italy were open to the foe.

On the 2nd of April, 568, the Longobards evacuated Pannonia, and marching through Enona (Laibach), and the valley of the Save, crossed the Julian Alps, and advanced into Venetia. They brought their women, children, old folk, and household gear in a train of waggons which served as shelters by night. From a picture of rather later date, painted by order of Queen Theodolinda, we see that these barbarians were garbed in wide linen robes of various colours with breeches laced up in front, and that their hair was cut short at the back of

the head, but parted over the forehead in long side-locks. As usual the Longobard host comprised a motley throng of Bavarians, Bulgarians, Gepidæ, Swabians, and more especially Saxons, numbering, it was said, no less than 20,000. Almost all these tribes were professedly of the Arian creed, although they had some pagans amongst them ; but they were not intolerant in religious matters. There is much uncertainty regarding their numerical strength, which has been variously calculated by the chroniclers at from 20,000 to 120,000 fighting men. The army cannot have been a large one ; but if the Saxons alone counted 20,000, and could abandon the campaign later on without the Longobards being too much weakened to pursue their course of conquest, it would be absurd to believe that the latter could have numbered no more than 20,000 in all. The most general estimate is that they had from 60,000 to 70,000 fighting men, by no means a large force, remembering the losses they must have suffered, and the necessity of planting garrisons in the principal cities they captured. Probably, however, their losses were easily replaced by remnants of the Gothic forces, and possibly also by some disbanded Byzantine soldiery, among whom no few barbarians were to be found.

According to most authorities, Alboin had crossed the frontiers of Italy by the month of May, 568, and quickly constituted a Duchy at Cividale in Friuli,[1] under the rule of his cousin Gisulf and a sufficient military force. He thus secured possession of an important strategic position, that was, virtually, one of the gates of Italy. In fact, it enabled him to guard the passage of the frontier, and to cover his own retreat in case of need. But all went well with the Longobards : the Franks being absorbed in civil warfare at home, and the Byzantines paralysed by lack

[1] The word Friuli is derived from Alboin's Duchy of Forum Julii.

of men and money ; accordingly, one after another, the cities of Italy surrendered to the foe. The Patriarch of Aquileia quickly withdrew to Grado and fixed his abode there ; but the Bishop of Treviso, learning that Alboin was tolerant regarding religion, begged him to respect all the Church property of his diocese, and the request being promptly granted, opened the city gates to him. Thereupon Vicenza and Verona did the same. But Padua, Monselice, and Mantua, being fortified towns, refused to surrender, so that Alboin was forced to pass the winter in Venetia. Fortunately for him, cold and snow were succeeded by a season of abundance in that fertile land, so that he was able to find sustenance for his army. Then, leaving Padua and Monselice untouched, he captured Mantua, after which success, Brescia, Bergamo, and Trent made surrender with all their territories. Finally, on the 3rd of September, 569, even Milan decided to yield to him seeing that its ruined walls had been only partially rebuilt by Narses, and the Bishop of Milan retired to Genoa. The beginning of the Longobard rule may be said to date from this event, although it was still limited to Northern Italy for the moment.

Nevertheless, Piacenza, Cremona, and other cities on the Po were still holding out, partly owing to the strength of their walls, and partly because aid could reach them from Ravenna by river. But, as we have previously said, Pavia alone made a prolonged, and truly stubborn defence. Already a very important city and afterwards the capital of the Longobard kingdom, it was not only strongly fortified, but also strongly garrisoned, and therefore contrived to hold out for three consecutive years (569-72). Alboin, accordingly, left part of his army to carry on the siege and proceeded to conquer other towns in Northern and Central Italy, such as Parma, Reggio, Modena, Bologna, and Imola. He also

seized the Furlo Pass and pushed on to Urbino. However, besides Ravenna and Pavia, even Padua, Monselice, Cremona, Piacenza, Genoa, many towns of the Riviera, together with the five cities of the future Pentapolis, *i.e.*, Rimini, Pesaro, Fano, Sinigaglia, and Ancona were still holding out for the Empire.

Before extending their operations, the Longobards should have sought to consolidate their newly-gained dominions, by reducing the cities still held by the Byzantines. But as, unlike other barbarians, they had never been subjected for long to the discipline of the Empire and the Catholic Church; their primitive Germanic character survived comparatively intact, and they never acquired any real political aptitude, nor any faculty for organisation. In fact, they soon began to fight in a desultory fashion without any commander-in-chief, any settled plan of action, or even any settled purpose. Several bands scattered in different directions to fight on their own account. Some marched away to the south, where they laid the foundations of the Duchies of Spoleto and Benevento, which afterwards became thoroughly independent states. The rest of Southern Italy, and more especially the shores of the Adriatic and Mediterranean, remained imperial. Naples and Rome were specially staunch to the Empire, and were able to maintain free communication with Ravenna, thanks to their possession of Perugia which, although surrounded by places in Longobard hands, remained almost invariably faithful to its liege sovereign. Meanwhile the invaders not only carried on their campaigns and sieges with divided forces and without any settled scheme; but between 569 and 571 certain Longobard bands from North Italy undertook an expedition on their own account against the Franks of Southern Gaul. They forgot the risk of inciting a very powerful foe to pursue them across the Alps and seize their newly-

won territories which had yet to be consolidated. More than once their reckless attacks were defeated, and they would have been seriously worsted had the Franks been less distracted by intestine strife. Good fortune seemed always to attend them. For, on the one hand, their expeditions against the Franks led to none of the fatal consequences that might have been expected ; while, on the other, no difficulties occurred to check their triumphs in Italy. In 572, after a three-years' siege, even Pavia was forced to surrender, and afterwards became the capital of the kingdom.

Alboin entered Theodoric's palace in triumph, and, notwithstanding his previous resolve to revenge himself on the citizens, treated them with humanity. In the spring of 573 (or according to some authorities, of 572), he expired in his palace at Verona. Minute details of his death are to be found in a somewhat fantastic and legendary narrative. At a State banquet one day—so runs the tale—Alboin seized the bowl made of King Cunimund's skull and invited his queen, Rosamund, to "take a draught in her father's company." The insult cut her to the quick, and she resolved to avenge it. She first revealed her purpose to the King's foster-brother, Helmichis ; but as the latter disliked staining his own hands with his brother's blood, he advised her to consult a certain Peredeus, who was a man of great daring and physical strength. But finding that even Peredeus shrank from doing the deed, the Queen went to him in the dress of a waiting maid with whom he had an intrigue, and as soon as she was alone with him threw off her disguise and threatened to reveal their meeting to the King if he refused any longer to obey her commands. So the murder was finally arranged. One afternoon, when the drunken monarch was sleeping off the effects of his mid-day

potations, Rosamund tied up the sword that hung ready to his hand at the head of the couch, in such-wise as to prevent it from being unsheathed. Then, presently, Peredeus slipped into the chamber and fell upon Alboin, who, after vainly attempting to seize his sword, defended himself for a while with a footstool, but was finally slain by his assailant. Rosamund then bestowed her hand on Helmichis, hoping to secure the throne by his aid; but the Longobard Dukes were so indignant at the crime, that the guilty pair were soon obliged to fly for their lives. So they implored Longinus, Narses' successor, to send a vessel to their aid, and he despatched one from Ravenna up the Po. In this manner they contrived to escape by ship with a handful of soldiers and Alboin's daughter, Albsuinda. Next, according to the legend, Rosamund conceived the idea of marrying Longinus, and to that effect administered poison to her husband while he was taking a bath. But Helmichis instantly discovered the deadly nature of the draught, and forced his wife at the sword's point to drain the goblet to the dregs. Thus both perished together. Longinus then despatched the child Albsuinda to Constantinople, together with all the jewels her fugitive mother had borne off from Verona. In Ranke's opinion, this legend proves that grave discord prevailed among the Longobards at the time; one party being in favour of the Byzantines, the other opposed to them. Now, however, the indignation excited by the murder of Alboin, overthrew all Rosamund's schemes and procured the triumph of the national party.

But dissension was also rife among the Dukes. They elected Cleph, Duke of Bergamo, as Alboin's successor, but all we know about him is that, after reigning for eighteen months, he was killed by a slave (575). Meanwhile the same uncertain course of policy had been

pursued, *i.e.*, with no fixed plan of action. Even in 569 and 570, as we have already noted, some of the Dukes had attacked the Franks and suffered defeat at their hands. Another equally ineffectual assault on them had been undertaken by the Saxon auxiliaries of the Longobard host, with the object of trying to force a way back to their own land. This Saxon contingent comprised 20,000 men, and as the Longobards refused to allow them to settle in Italy, *proprio jure—i.e.*, maintaining their own institutions and following their own customs—they determined to leave the country. So, in 573, they started off with their families and all their belongings, after obtaining a free pass from the Franks, who were naturally well pleased that so large a force should desert the Longobard ranks. Nevertheless, the latter, thirsting for spoil, resumed their ill-planned aggressions in 574-76, but were again decidedly repulsed. At last an agreement was patched up, and there was peace for a while between the two nations. But this peace, while securing the Longobards from external attack—at a time when the Byzantines were too much absorbed in the Persian War to take the field in Italy—also served to foment internal discord. In fact, when Cleph was killed in 575, the Dukes could not agree as to the choice of a new king, and ended by doing without one and arranging that every Duke should rule his territories in his own name as an independent sovereign. They followed this plan for ten years, but then, being again threatened by dangers from abroad, were compelled to decide on restoring the monarchy. Meanwhile, Longobard Italy was divided into thirty-six duchies, but the names of a few only (such as Pavia, Brescia, Trent, Cividale, Milan, Spoleto, and Benevento) [1]

[1] Pavia, Milan, Bergamo, Forogiulio (Cividale) or Frinli, Spoleto, Turin, Asti, Benevento, Ivrea, Isle of St. Julian on the Lake of Orta, Verona, Vicenza, Treviso, Ceneda, Parma, Piacenza, Chiusi, Lucca,

are authentically known to us. There is some uncertainty about the designations of most of the other duchies, and little is known regarding the names of their rulers.

This new state of things was undoubtedly hurtful to the native inhabitants. At first the Longobard rule, which, although established by force of arms, had, after all, been feebly opposed, proved a positive relief to the country by freeing it from the unbearable fiscal exactions of the Byzantines, and by founding a more settled government gave it greater security than it had known since Narses vented his spite at being deprived of the command by leaving everything in disorder, not to say anarchy. Paulus Diaconus bears witness to the improved conditions of the country during Alboin's reign. In fact, after mentioning the abundant harvest that was reaped in the first year of the Longobard rule, he adds that the population of Italy "grew as fast as oats." He makes no allusion as yet to the division of the soil that was accomplished shortly after this time; therefore it may be supposed that at first the Longobards only seized such landed property and revenue as the Byzantine fiscal authorities had already acquired from the Goths.

Paulus Diaconus, however, goes on to state that, after the monarchy had lapsed, things went very badly during the interregnum, since instead of one master there were now thirty-six, each of whom taxed the country at his own pleasure. Many rich Roman nobles possessed of vast estates were put to death by the Dukes who seized their lands. Others were reduced to the condition of tributaries and forced to pay the conquerors one-third

Firenze and Fermo. The Duchies of Rimini, Brescello, Reggio, Istria, and a few others are also recorded; but whether they were really constituted at this period or at a later date has not been accurately ascertained.

of their income, *tertiam partem suarum frugum.* It may be noted that this was worse than having to yield one-third of the land, since it deprived the Italians of all free ownership. Then, too, numerous churches were sacked by the Arian invaders, who likewise killed many priests as well as nobles in order to confiscate their property; so that the inhabitants of the country were robbed and over-taxed in every way.

The Pope and the people of Rome were in a highly critical position, surrounded and threatened by the Longobards on all sides, and, more particularly, by the Duke of Spoleto and Benevento. Communication with Ravenna was so continually cut off that, although the death of Pope John III. took place in July, 574, the consecration of his successor, Benedict I., had to be deferred for ten months on account of the impossibility of receiving the imperial sanction at an earlier date; while the next Pope, Pelagius II., elected in 579, had to be resigned to assuming the mitre without it. This state of things finally led the Romans to decide on organising a special army for their own defence, and inventing some form of self-government. For the moment, however, they still placed their hope in the Byzantines, and sought help from them. But no aid could be expected from the incapable Longinus. It is true that Baduarius, a kinsman of the Emperor, had been despatched from Constantinople to supersede him; but in passing through Campania, not far from Naples, he was defeated in a skirmish with the Longobards, and soon died of his wounds (576). Accordingly, the Romans determined on making a direct appeal to the Emperor, and sent ambassadors to him with a gift of three thousand pounds of gold, imploring him to despatch an armed force to protect the Pope and the Eternal City from Barbarian and Arian attacks, and thus maintain the authority both of

the Empire and the Church. But in 578 the Emperor Justin II. had gone mad, and Tiberius II., who ruled in his stead and afterwards succeeded him, was too busy with the Persian War to be able to give Italy any help. He therefore advised the Roman envoys to use the gold they had brought as a means of inducing the Longobards to keep the peace. If unsuccessful in that quarter, he added, they might try next to bribe the Franks to attack them. It is certain that the Byzantines were now reduced to such impotence in Italy that, in 579, the Duke of Spoleto was enabled to seize Classe on the Adriatic, the sea-port of Ravenna, which was retained by the Longobards down to the year 588. Even the Perugian lands were freely scoured by these Barbarians, and in 581 the Duke of Benevento laid siege to Naples, which made, however, a very valiant defence. About this time (the exact date is unknown) the monastery of Monte Cassino was sacked and destroyed, whereupon the brethren escaped to Rome, with the original MS. of St. Benedict's Rule, and founded a new cloister there.

During this *lacrimabile bellum*, as the chroniclers styled the war, Pope Pelagius II., forsaken by the Empire and menaced by the Longobards, made his first appeal to the Franks. On the 5th October, 580,[1] or, as some assert, in 581, he wrote to the Bishop of Auxerre, begging him to remind the Franks that, "as orthodox Christians, their duty to God pledged them to defend Rome and all Italy from that most infamous Longobard brood, whom they were bound to cast off unless they wished to share the certain doom by which that tribe would soon be overtaken." What seems stranger still, these negotiations were actually seconded by the Emperor himself, their necessity being continually urged upon him

[1] According to Weise, *Italien und die Longobardenherrscher;* Troya, on the contrary, dates it the 5th October, 581.

by Gregory the Apocrisarius, afterwards Gregory the Great, and one of the greatest men of that age. The Emperor Maurice, who succeeded to Tiberius II. in 582, sent the Franks the sum of fifty thousand *aurei*, to induce them to turn their arms against the Longobards. Accordingly, the latter were suddenly assailed by so overwhelming a force that they were compelled to take refuge behind the walls of fortified cities. But, as usual, the Franks were again distracted by civil strife at home, and therefore easily bribed by lavish gifts to hasten back to their own land.

Here it should be noted that from this moment certain clearly-traced characteristics begin to emerge which were continually reproduced in the subsequent course of Italian history. Owing to the Longobard conquest, the Peninsula is already split into separate fragments, which are never again brought into permanent reunion. Now, too, the civil and religious powers stand opposed, and we see the beginning of the struggle between Church and State that is to last throughout the Middle Ages, and endures to the present day. At this moment the Popes first adopted the course of policy towards the Franks that they unceasingly followed for two centuries, that proved triumphant in the days of Pippin and Charlemagne, and has never been wholly abandoned by the Church. But when the Franks had evacuated Italy the Pope once more made appeal to the Emperor. On the 4th October, 584, he wrote to his Apocrisarius, Gregory, enjoining him to explain to the Byzantine Government the full extent of Italy's needs and perils (*necessitates vel pericula totius Italiæ*) and all the continual tribulations inflicted by the Longobards on the Duchy of Rome, so as to induce the Emperor to despatch at least a Master of the Soldiery and a Duke to his aid, inasmuch as Decius the Exarch could afford no protection to Rome, having

barely sufficient strength to defend the other Italian provinces of the Empire. This memorable letter has an additional value from the fact of containing the first official mention of the title of Exarch. In 585 Smaragdus, or Smeraldus, arrived from Constantinople with a strong body of soldiers (*firmo copiarum supplemento*). This man was certainly one of the first Exarchs, and he immediately set to work with notable skill and energy to renew the alliance with the Franks against the Longobards.

## CHAPTER II

RESTORATION OF THE MONARCHY — ELECTION OF AUTHARI — HIS WARS WITH THE BYZANTINES AND FRANKS—HIS MARRIAGE WITH THEODELINDA —CONDITION OF THE VANQUISHED

In consequence of the threatened alliance between the Byzantines and the Franks, the Longobards were compelled to take thought how to cope with the danger. Hence, in order to gain a united administration, and above all a united system of defence, they decided to reconstitute the monarchy. Calling an Assembly at Pavia, between the end of 584 and the beginning of 585, they chose Authari, son of Cleph, as their king. The next thing to be done was to furnish him with a patrimony and a civil list, so that he might possess a suitable maintenance and be able to remunerate the officials of his Court. To this end the dukes yielded him one-half of their possessions—those either robbed from slaughtered nobles or confiscated in other ways—but retained one-third of the revenue from estates owned by Romans. According to some writers, however, one-third of the land was now taken in exchange for that third of the revenue, and thus the original owners gained the advantage of being allowed to retain two-thirds of their freehold property. Therefore, as many more provinces had been recently annexed by the Longobards, it is very probable that the

allotment of newly acquired territory was arranged so as to compensate those who had been obliged to cede part of their private possessions to the king. This land question has been the theme of much learned dispute, and the words used by Paulus Diaconus in speaking of the subject have been twisted in numerous ways in order to extract evidence that he never gave, nor indeed could be qualified to give, regarding a matter on which it was difficult for a man living about two centuries later to have any accurate information. In fact, he merely states that the Dukes yielded half their substance to the king, and that all tributary inhabitants were divided among the conquerors ("*populi tamen adgravati per langobardos hospites partiunter*," III., 16). It is impossible to infer from these words, as some writers have alleged, that the Romans were reduced to such degradation as to be little better than slaves of the soil; indeed, it may be said that this interpretation is in direct contradiction with the historian's words. For, after observing that the lapse of the monarchy caused grave injury to the Romans, he goes on to say, when recording its restoration, that "in this kingdom no man was over-taxed, oppressed, or stripped of his goods; justice was equally administered to all; no acts of robbery were committed; every one could go safely whithersoever he would." Had he meant to say that the state of things became much worse under King Authari, he certainly would not have expressed himself in those terms. Besides, it is an ascertained fact that during this reign everything went on, both in peace and war, with greater order and regularity than before; that the long duration of the Longobard rule was owed to the re-erection of the monarchy, and in some degree also to the personal efforts of King Authari.

Alarmed by the threatened agreement between the Byzantines and Franks, the Longobards attempted to

arrange an alliance with the latter—but without success; and as the Franco-Byzantine pact was broken almost before it was concluded, independent campaigns were again undertaken on all sides. In 587 the Longobards were fighting the Byzantines in Friuli and Istria, and the following year took from them the fortified island of Comacina. At the same time Smaragdus finally recaptured Classis, and the Franks streamed down over the Splügen to give battle to the Longobards. But on this occasion Authari was prepared for war, and attacked the invaders with such impetuous valour that he routed them with immense slaughter. "*Tantaque ibi strages facta est de Francorum exercitu, quanta usque ibi non memoratur*" (Paulus Diaconus, III., 29).

The Emperor was already vexed with Smaragdus for neglecting to succour the Franks on the day of their defeat, and his anger was increased by the general's highly imprudent and intemperate conduct with regard to religious matters. In order to support the Emperor and put an end to a very futile and tiresome controversy, the Pope had condemned the *Three Chapters*, and pronounced that such condemnation had been already implicitly admitted by the Council of Chalcedon itself. Thereupon the people of Istria and Venice were stirred to such excitement as to threaten a real schism in the Church. Yet Smaragdus, instead of endeavouring to calm the public mind according to the instructions sent from Constantinople, adopted the violent measure of arresting certain bishops and bearing them off to prison at Ravenna. This act caused him to be recalled, and he was succeeded in 589 by the Exarch Romanus, who governed with far greater wisdom.

About this time Authari, being increasingly anxious to strengthen his position on the throne for the benefit of his own line, decided to take a wife, and asked the hand

of Theodelinda, daughter of Garibald, the Duke of Bavaria, whose territories marched with those of his overlord Childebert, King of the Franks. Authari chose this lady for political reasons, since in the event of hostilities with the Franks, an alliance with Bavaria might be of great service to him. It is said that, on receiving a favourable reply to his first suggestion of marriage, he disguised himself as one of the envoys and started off with the rest to make his formal demand to the princess (588). At first sight of his future bride he was so fascinated by her beauty that when, in obedience to custom, she served the envoys with wine, he could not refrain from secretly taking her hand and kissing it, thus betraying that he was her suitor. On the journey back Authari stood up in his stirrups the moment he had crossed the border of his own dominions, openly declared himself to all, and, hurling his axe into the trunk of a tree, cried aloud, "Thus strikes the King of the Longobards." But Childebert was so wrath at the news of the proposed alliance that he made war on Bavaria, and Theodelinda was compelled to make a hurried flight, escorted by her brother Gundwald, over the mountains to Verona, where the bridegroom came to receive her, and where the wedding was celebrated on May 5, 589.

Roused to fury by this marriage, the Franks suddenly swooped down upon Authari, who, being taken unawares, would have been worsted in the struggle had not a fresh outbreak of civil war in their own land compelled the foe to withdraw. Possibly too their retreat was hastened by the inundations which did such cruel havoc that year in Italy and Gaul that, according to Paulus Diaconus, no such flood had ever been seen since the Deluge. As a natural consequence, this disaster was followed by an outbreak of the black plague, of which Pope Pelagius II. was one of the numerous victims. The new Pontiff, anointed

on the 3rd of September, 590, was Gregory the Great, who was destined to play a prominent part in Italian history, and was frequently engaged in vigorous strife with the Longobards.

At the first moment of truce after these various calamities, Authari resumed the task of consolidating his kingdom and extending his conquests in Northern Italy. But the tale of his having marched on to Reggio in Calabria, and then exclaimed, "Authari's kingdom only ends here!" is entirely fabulous. The legend probably referred to Reggio in Æmilia; for the dukes of Spoleto and Benevento then held sway in Southern Italy, and it would have been impossible for Authari to move far from the northern provinces while the Emperor was continually urging the Franks to resume the war they were pledged to wage against the Longobards, and for which he had vainly supplied them with funds. "It was time," so the Emperor impatiently wrote to them, "to pass from words to deeds, *enarrata viriliter . . . peragere.*" Finally Romanus the Exarch contrived to conclude an agreement with them for a combined attack upon the Longobards. Accordingly, in the spring of 590, the Franks marched part of their army against Milan, while the rest advanced on Verona by the valley of the Adige. The Byzantines made a simultaneous advance from Ravenna, and many towns and several Longobard dukes voluntarily submitted to them. There was then much lurking disaffection among the dukes, some of their number being adverse to the restoration of the monarchy, and others having hoped to be chosen king instead of Authari. Profiting by their discontent, it had been settled by the terms of the agreement that in three days' time the Franks and Byzantines were to effect a junction and make a combined attack on the Longobards. The Byzantines were to signal their arrival by the smoke of a beacon fire lighted

on a neighbouring hill. But not one of these plans was carried out. The Franks only raided the land, and then suddenly withdrew, accusing the Byzantines of having left them unsupported without attempting to advance. On the other hand, the Exarch Romanus wrote to King Childebert, declaring "that he was on the point of surrounding the Longobards, when he learnt that the Franks were treating for peace with Authari. Accordingly he had been compelled to give the signal for retreat just when the moment had come to sweep Italy clear of that most villainous Longobard brood." Also, he presently expressed his hope that the king would resume the war "by despatching trustworthy captains (*dignos duces*) to Italy, who would not be satisfied with merely capturing some of the Romans and pillaging their lands." But nothing more was done in the matter. The fact was that although both Franks and Byzantines were equally desirous to expel the Longobards from Italy, both wished to seize the country for themselves. Therefore they acted in concert while attacking their common foe, but at the first chance of victory immediately divided, each nation acting not only on its own account, but also to the other's detriment. Naturally all this proved an advantage to Authari, and he was already gaining the upper hand, when sudden death overtook him on the 5th of September, 590.

Flavius Authari may be regarded as one of the chief founders of the Longobard kingdom. In assuming a Roman name, he followed the example of Odovacar and other Barbarian leaders and, apparently, as a proof of his desire to make terms with the Empire. But Odovacar and Theodoric came to rule Italy as delegates of the Empire; whereas Alboin and the Longobards settled there of their own initiative, in their own name, and the new monarchy they founded was not only an inde-

pendent state, but frequently at war with the Byzantines for the purpose of driving them from the country. The Longobards were the first barbarians who proclaimed real laws of their own in Italy, and enforced the same without any reference to the Emperor. Neither did they permit the Romans to retain any of the privileges granted them by Theodoric. In short, the Barbarians were now at last masters of the country, and would recognise no other laws, nor authority, than their own. This greatly contributed to the diffusion of a mistaken idea that Italians were reduced if not to actual slavery, at least to the condition of domestic labourers, *i.e.*, of semi-servitude. Some writers, as we have previously said, tried to support this theory by twisting the words of Paulus Diaconus. Another argument they were wont to adduce in its favour was, that although the Longobard law fixes the amount of blood-money *(guidrigild)* to be exacted for the murder of a Longobard, it assigns no penalty for the murder of a Roman. This proved, they said, that the conquerors attached no value to the life of the vanquished, because the latter were slaves. But it is thoroughly preposterous to draw so weighty an inference from the mere silence of the law on the point in question. Rather, as Capponi has remarked, this silence might also imply that the penalty for killing one of the conquered race was fixed by the usual custom. According to Sybel, however, the silence might be understood to prove that theoretically, at any rate, no difference was made between the life of a Roman and that of a Longobard, hence the penalty would be identical in either case. Nevertheless it is hard to believe that the conquered would not have been treated far worse than the conquerors.

However this may be, the once widely-spread theory of the Romans' state of servitude, is now cast aside. It is rather difficult to comprehend how it could have won

such general acceptance, regardless of the enormous difficulties to be smoothed away, in order to make it credible. For if the Longobards had robbed the Romans of all personal freedom, how is it possible that there should be no explicit mention of so serious a fact either in the chronicles, laws, or public and private documents of the period? Seeing, too, that during the continual Longobard-Byzantine wars many towns and territories repeatedly changed hands, being captured and recaptured by either side in turn, we should be driven to suppose that the inhabitants of such towns and territories passed from freedom to slavery and *vice-versa* without one cry of rejoicing or despair being heard; without one attempt at revolt; and without any record being preserved of such events! Besides, some of the great landowners had estates situated partly in the Longobard and partly in the Byzantine dominions. Are we to believe that the owners and cultivators of such lands were slaves on one part of their soil and free men on another? In the letters of Gregory the Great we find mention of Roman citizens inhabiting the Longobard territories of Brescia and Pisa. Were they free men, or did they become slaves when established on Longobard soil? In such case, must we believe that they had voluntarily forsaken Byzantine lands where they were free to submit to slavery under Longobard rule? Also, if we admit the supposition urged by some writers, that city artisans who owned no scrap of the soil retained their freedom, while landed proprietors whose property had been divided were reduced to bondage, in that case the condition of the working classes would have been far superior to that of great landowners, nobles, and senators! In short, we are forced to conclude that, in spite of all the learned arguments adduced in its favour, the theory of Italian servitude under the Longobard rule is totally confuted by the mass of opposing facts weighing against it.

## NOTE.

It may be of use to give an outline of some of the numerous disputes which arose regarding the condition of the Italians during the Longobard rule, owing to the varied interpretation of Paulus Diaconus's words.

The main dispute turned on the two following passages. The first tells us that: *His diebus multi nobilium Romanorum ob cupiditatem interfecti sunt. Reliqui vero per hospites divisi, ut terciam partem suarum frugum Longobardis persolverent, tributarii efficiuntur* (II. 32). This was interpreted as signifying that the Longobards killed many of the Roman nobles, and that the others (*reliqui*)—*i.e.*, all the rest of the inhabitants—were divided among the Longobard "guests," and being compelled to pay them a third of their revenues (*tertiam partem suarum frugum*), were therefore their tributaries. But apart from the fact that the term *reliqui* undoubtedly refers to the *nobiles*, how could *all* the Romans be made tributaries and forced to pay a third of their income, since *all* would necessarily include even those who possessed nothing? Then, too, Paulus Diaconus makes at no point the slightest allusion to the supposed enslavement of the Romans credited by some authorities, and indeed such enslavement would be in open contradiction, as we have already remarked, with what he states in a subsequent sentence. On this head, Sybel has observed (p. 429) that the passage cannot be interpreted to mean that even the poor were divided *per longobardos hospites*, since *hospitalitas* could only mean a relation existing between the Roman *proprietor* and the Longobard, the latter being the *patronus*, not the *hospes* of tenants (*coloni*) and field-labourers.

The other passage of Paulus that has fed the dispute refers to what took place on the restoration of the Monarchy, when Authari was elected King. After stating that the Dukes gave half their property to the King, for his personal use and the payment of his officers or adherents, *omnem substantiarum suarum medietatem*, Paulus Diaconus adds: *Populi tamen adgravati per longobardos hospites partiuntur* (III. 16). The term *populi adgravati* led to the belief that the inhabitants were more cruelly taxed after the King's election, because the Dukes tried to recoup themselves at the public expense for what they had been forced to cede to their monarch. But Paulus Diaconus neither said nor implied anything of the kind, for he declares, on the contrary, that the people fared much better under the Monarchy. In the Longobard kingdom, he tells us, *nulla erat violentia, nullæ struebantur insidiæ; nemo aliquem iniuste angariabat, nemo spoliabat;*

*non erant furta, non latrocinia ; unusquisque quo libebat securus sine timore pergebat* (*ibid.*). Accordingly, the only overburdened inhabitants were those who had been already made tributaries, and were therefore divided among the Longobard proprietors who had ceded to the King one-half of the estates they held in their own right ; that is to say, one-half of the confiscated estates of slaughtered Roman nobles. As before remarked, it may be also supposed that after the aggrandisement of the kingdom a fresh division of the land may have been made, and consequently a fresh allotment of conquered tributaries among the victors. This, however, is a mere inference, for Paulus Diaconus says nothing to that effect.

Next, seeing that in this second passage he makes no further allusion to the revenues from the land *(frugum)*, so certain writers have, with some reason, taken it for granted that, under Authari's rule, there was no division of the revenue, but only of the land, of which one-third had been handed over to the Longobards and two-thirds left in the free possession of the Romans, an arrangement that proved advantageous to both parties. This reading of the passage is supported by a variant (only existing, however, in a single codex, and that one of somewhat doubtful authenticity), which instead of the words *per hospites partiuntur*, has, *hospitia partiuntur*, meaning therefore that neither the people nor the revenue was divided, but that the estates, *hospitia*, were divided instead. This is all that can be said upon the subject ; and it is a futile task to ransack the pages of Paulus Diaconus for things he never said and probably knew little about, having lived at a much later period. This indeed may account for the vagueness of his expressions ; but we have no right to profit by that vagueness, in order to twist his words to our own liking.

# CHAPTER III

## ORGANISATION OF THE LONGOBARD KINGDOM AND OF THE BYZANTINE GOVERNMENT

We must now try to gain a clear although summary idea of the form of government established in our country by the Longobards, since if at any time, as some writers have asserted, the thread of Roman tradition was entirely broken in Italy and every trace of Roman laws and institutions obliterated, this could have only taken place during the Longobard rule. For this rule not only lasted longer than any other Barbarian domination, but it is a well known fact that the Ostrogoths continued to enforce Roman laws and institutions, that the Byzantines themselves used the same laws and institutions, and that the Franks, when they made their appearance later on, were already Romanised to a certain extent. On the other hand, the Longobards, as we have seen, had been brought into much slighter contact with the Empire, and had openly warred against it for the purpose of expelling it from Italy. But, having long forsaken the ancient seats of their tribe, and long wandered about the world more or less in the fashion of a mercenary host, they were naturally unable to maintain intact their primitive Germanic institutions. Naturally, too, the laws they now had were not exclusively evolved from earlier forms into which certain radical changes had unavoidably crept

owing to the novel conditions in which the Barbarians now lived, and their intercourse with other races. Nevertheless, they still remained a congeries of separate bodies and incapable of forming a compact and united nation. This was the cause of the perpetual disorder that reigned among them, that prevented them from completing the conquest of Italy, and that finally led to their downfall.

The Longobard Monarchy was neither exclusively hereditary nor exclusively elective. The King could be elected by the people, but sometimes the people merely ratified the election of the person designated by their chiefs, whose choice generally fell upon a member of some special family or clan. Occasionally the people transferred their elective rights to others. Thus, on the death of Authari, they authorised his widow Theodelinda to choose a second husband, who was to be and was actually proclaimed the new King of the Longobards. The monarch was the civil and military head of the nation; he commanded the army, and he administered justice with the assistance of coadjutors chosen by himself from time to time. The laws issued in his name were based on usages already adopted by the people, and after being put into shape by the King in concert with the chiefs, were then submitted for approval to the general assembly of the people, who had to decide whether those laws fittingly represented the customs in question. The King was also empowered to issue orders or decrees on his own authority, and in course of time, and owing to the persistent influence of Roman law, these royal decrees increased in number and importance. But the special characteristic of this Longobard kingdom was the fact of its being divided into Duchies under Dukes appointed for life by the King, and who were more like independent viceroys than real officers of the Crown. They not only strove to obtain greater independence, but also, and

occasionally with success, to secure hereditary powers, as in the case of Friuli, Spoleto, and Benevento. For the Duke of Spoleto assumed the title of *Dux gentis Longobardorum*, while the Duke of Benevento became a really autonomous and hereditary sovereign. Nevertheless, other Dukes nearer at hand failed to achieve this result, inasmuch as the King naturally opposed it in order to keep them subject to his own authority. Hence there was perpetual strife between the throne and the magnates, which led to continual revolts, brought many Kings to a violent end, and so shattered the strength of the kingdom that it could never be solidly organised. Thus, after more than two centuries of domination, violence, and tyranny, the Longobards had failed to make Italy German, and ended by becoming Romanised themselves and virtually merged in the nation they had conquered.

The Longobards, however, had certain genuine officers of the Crown called *gastaldi* who were nominated by the King and could be dismissed at his pleasure. They administered the *Curtis Regia—i.e.*, all the property of the Crown—and therefore resided on the Crown lands of different Duchies. They kept watch over the Dukes and acted as judges and military leaders within their own jurisdiction. The Longobard monarchs always tried to raise the number of these *gastaldi*, as the best means of strengthening the royal power and giving some organic unity to their kingdom. Accordingly, in course of time they always preferred to place newly-won territory in the charge of *gastaldi* rather than of Dukes. The King also had certain personal attendants called *gasindi*, who were familiars or courtiers, and also gained wider power in course of time. A more important institution was a Ducal Council, from which, as a rule, Romans were naturally excluded; but to which bishops were admitted, although, at first, only if they were Romans. It is plain

that institutions such as these could not suffice to consolidate the Monarchy on a solid basis. The Dukes always tried to ape the functions of royalty in every particular. They administered justice and commanded the troops in their own Duchies, undertook military expeditions on their own account ; and even occasionally, by order of the King, assumed the entire or partial command of the national army. They too had *gasindi* of their own in attendance, officials acting as *gastaldi*, together with others styled "sculdasci" (*Sculdahis*), all exercising different degrees of administrative, judicial, and military power. The nomination of Ducal officers belonged by right to the Crown ; but the Dukes always tried to usurp that right and often with success. For instance, there were no royal *Gastaldi* in the Duchy of Benevento, but only officials appointed by the Dukes.

It has been much discussed whether the Longobards in general, and more particularly their Dukes, resided in the country or in the cities. But there is reason to think that they must have inhabited the towns, and especially the principal cities. Each of these comprised a territory of its own, determined by the ancient Roman circumscription, on which were based the bishops' dioceses, and which were identical with the so-called *Giudiciarie*, or judicial circuits of the Longobard Duchies. This territory, together with the town it encircled, was styled a *Civitas*, and the mass of the Longobards, and particularly their Dukes, undoubtedly abode within its limits. But that they should have resided habitually within the walls of cities teeming *ab antiquo* with a Roman population is a theory easier of suggestion than proof. In consequence of the Germanic invasion, the centre of gravity had been transferred to country districts. The Germans were a rural people, ignorant of cities ; later on, country castles gave birth to feudalism, the leading institution of the

mediæval world ; and the great feudal lords of the country are continually referred to as Teutons or Lombards in our chroniclers' pages.

The Byzantines still held sway in all Italian places of which the Longobards had failed to gain possession, and the fact of this forced contact naturally caused some changes in the institutions of either race. The Pragmatic Sanction prescribed the separation of the civil from the military power. In fact, the *Præfectus Prætorio* resident in Ravenna, the *Vicarius Urbis* in Rome, and a *Vicarius Italie* in Genoa were the three heads of the civil administration. Law-suits between Romans were decided by *Judices Provinciarum* nominated by the bishops. The Præfecture of Italy, after being separated from that of Rhœtia and the Islands, had become more and more restricted and now comprised only a few portions of the peninsula. Sicily had a Prefect of its own ; Sardinia and Corsica were under the Exarch of Africa. But as warfare was still going on, and could not be brought to an end for a while, so, notwithstanding the existence of Præfects and Vicars, both the civil and the military power were virtually vested in the Byzantine Dukes. These latter were charged with the government and defence of all the Empire's remaining provinces, some of which were not only separate, but also far distant from one another ; they were also face to face with Longobard Dukes, who were likewise separate and independent potentates. So henceforth Italy became increasingly divided and subdivided.

The bureaucratic and centralising tendencies of the Byzantines made it necessary for the Empire to be represented in Italy by a supreme head invested, like the Emperor, with full authority in every branch of the Government. This head was the Exarch, who also bore the lofty name of Patrician, and whose seat of residence

was at Ravenna. The title of Exarch was usually conferred upon any general commanding a foreign expedition, and in this sense it has been rightly attributed by some writers to Belisarius and Narses. But it acquired an entirely distinct meaning and value in Italy from being solely bestowed on the leader who governed them in the name and as the representative of the Emperor, thus continuing, as it were, in another form the task formerly entrusted to Theodoric. Therefore, Belisarius and Narses were never Exarchs in this sense of the word, but only heads of the army and wielding military power. Who was the first Exarch in Italy is a much-disputed point. The earliest official mention of this title exists—as we have mentioned elsewhere—in a letter from Pope Pelagius II., of October 4, 584, which some writers say should be dated 585 instead. Decius, however, was certainly an Exarch, and before him, as asserted by some, Baduarius (575-76) also bore that title.

Decius only governed for a short time, and was succeeded by Smaragdus in 585. Theoretically, the Byzantine Dukes were subordinates of the Exarch, by whom they were appointed ; but as all the Dukes had separate territories, often at a great distance one from the other, practically they were independent rulers. Thus the Exarchate gradually became little more than a Duchy, merely raised above the rest by the fact of being governed by the supreme representative of the Empire.

In this more restricted sense of the word, the Exarchate extended from the Adige to the Marecchia, from the Adriatic to the Apennines, and comprised within its limits Ravenna and Bologna with their respective territories, and other cities of minor importance. Neighbouring on the Exarchate were the Maritime Pentapolis (Rimini, Pesaro, Fano, Sinigaglia, Ancona), and the Inland Pentapolis (or *Annonaria Castellorum*) of Urbino,

Fossombrone, Jesi, Cagli, and Gubbio, which, united with the first, formed the Decapolis, according to some writers, whereas others maintain that this name was applied to the second Pentapolis.[1]

In the seventh century the Byzantines also possessed the Duchy of Venice, part of Istria, Apulia, and Calabria (the territory of Otranto), Bruttium (the modern Calabria), Naples, Rome, and Genoa, with the Riviera. In general terms it may be said that all the cities on the coast of the Adriatic and Mediterranean were retained by the Byzantines, as the Longobards were never a seafaring people. The Exarch was commissioned to govern the *Regnum et Principatum totius Italiæ*, because the Empire always adhered to ancient formulas, even when they no longer corresponded with the actual state of things. At first, the Exarch nominated the Dukes and the Masters of the Soldiery, two separate offices which were often confused with each other, although the latter was inferior to the former and more exclusively military; inasmuch as the Master of the Soldiery in Rome only had command of the city troops, whereas the Duke commanded the troops of the whole Duchy. In reality, Dukes and Masters alike finally exercised both judicial and military functions, and, sometimes, administrative as well, so that there was little difference between them. The Duchies were divided into sections under the rule of Tribunes, who were often confused with Counts, resided in cities of secondary rank, and were dependents of the Duke or Master of the Soldiery, holding residence in the principal cities and commanding the whole Duchy. The number and extent of these Duchies varied according to the exigencies of war. Before the coming of the Longo-

[1] Inasmuch as the inland Pentapolis was also supposed to include Osimo, Umana, Montefeltro, the Valvense territory, and Luccoli. *Vide* Bury, "History of the Later Roman Empire," vol. ii. p. 146, note 4.

bards, several Duchies had been already constituted on the frontiers near the Alps, with bodies of soldiery styled *limitanei*, or borderers, who in times of peace cultivated the lands allotted to them, and had the right of bequeathing these to their children with the same obligation of defending the frontier. As we know, there was a very general tendency among the Byzantines to make all offices hereditary. After the Longobard invasion, and the consequent division and subdivision of Italy that ensued, the border stations were multiplied. Gradually they were to be found in almost every direction, inasmuch as the Byzantines had to keep off enemies on all sides. So new Duchies had to be continually formed, varying in number and extent as the tide of war advanced or receded.

The Exarch, who, as the Emperor's representative, had the right of nominating the Dukes, claimed for the same reason the right of intervening in ecclesiastical matters. Deeming it to be his duty to recall his subjects to the true faith, he threw bishops into prison, superintended and sanctioned the election of the Pope, and sometimes received orders from Constantinople to seize the Pontiff's person. Naturally, this state of things gave rise to endless quarrels, and not with Rome alone. The Byzantine Government was always in fear lest the Exarch should set up as an independent power; in fact, more than one had tried to do so. Hence efforts were made to weaken the Exarch's power, and enhance on the other hand the authority of the Dukes, by causing the Emperor either to nominate them himself, or to ratify their nomination when the people began to elect them. Consequently the Byzantine Dukes were not only more divided from one another and from the Exarch as they proceeded to split the country into pieces, but ended by freeing themselves from their allegiance and

occasionally proclaiming their absolute independence. This was the case, as we shall see, in Venice, Naples, Rome, and even Ravenna.

It will be remembered how, in 584, Pope Pelagius II. had complained that Rome possessed neither a Duke nor a Master of Soldiery. But by 592 Rome already had a Master of Soldiery to defend the walls, and in 625 the *Exercitus Romanus* (although first recorded in the "Pontifical Book" at the date of 640) officially attended the Pope's election. Also, not long afterwards, we find Gregory the Great summoning the inhabitants of the Duchy to arms in order to defend the city walls against the Longobards, from which it may be inferred that Rome was already on the road to self-government. For a long time there was a tendency to believe that every vestige of Roman law and Roman institutions had disappeared during the Longobard rule, together with every trace of the former municipal bodies. It has been frequently asserted that the ancient *Curia* was reduced to the work of collecting taxes, and that the Decurions were liable for the full amount, even if they had failed to gather it. Accordingly, it was no longer an honour to belong to the Curia, but rather an insupportable burden that all tried to shirk, even at the cost of voluntary exile; nor is there any documentary record of that institution after the year 625. It was also asserted that even in Byzantine Italy, where the Roman law was in full vigour, municipal administration had disappeared, having passed into the hands of the bishops and of quasi Government officials such as the *Curator* and the *Defensor*. The same writers go on to say that in Longobard Italy all civil business was managed by the *Curtis Regia*, the Dukes, the Gasindi, and, later on, by the Bishops. But most of these suppositions and theories are now rejected, even by those who formerly advocated them very zealously.

Indeed, were there any ground for those theories, it would be extremely hard to understand how the Longobards had contrived to govern and carry on the administrative affairs of the Italian inhabitants who mostly congregated in the cities. How was it possible for the rulers of the land to neglect all the town's folk, who, being artisans, mechanics, and tradesmen, ministered to their daily needs? No matter what the legal state of things may have been, it is difficult, if not impossible, to believe that the Longobards—even had they wished it—could have had the power to prevent the continuance among Italians of some relics, if only *de facto et usu*, of Roman institutions and Roman jurisprudence. The old laws had created a vast number of civil obligations, entirely unknown, even by name, to the Longobards. Then as regards what took place in the time of the Byzantines, who were ruled, even in their own country, by Roman laws and Roman institutions, the total disappearance of the municipality during their domination is quite incompatible with its speedy re-appearance in Venice, Rome, and many South Italian cities, which had remained more or less subject to Constantinople. But it is needless at this point to begin discussing a question that will reappear later on in a plainer and more urgent guise.

## CHAPTER IV

GREGORY I.—AGILULF ESPOUSES THEODELINDA AND PACIFIES THE KINGDOM — GREGORY I. MAKES PEACE WITH THE LONGOBARDS OF SPOLETO—AGILULF LAYS SIEGE TO ROME—DEPOSITION OF THE EMPEROR MAURICE; ELECTION OF PHOCAS—DEATH OF GREGORY I. AND OF AGILULF—ST. COLUMBANUS

Pope Pelagius II. and King Authari both died in 590. Thus there was a simultaneous change in the head of the Church and the monarch of the Longobards; and their successors, more especially the Pope, were men of the highest character. Gregory I., the new occupant of St. Peter's Chair, was born in Rome about 540 of a distinguished Senatorial family. His parents were such zealous Christians, that immediately after the birth of their son they both adopted the religious life. Their child became an earnest student of philosophy and letters, filled high offices of the State, and about the year 573, shortly after the Longobard invasion, was Prefect of Rome and President of the Senate. Soon, however, he too was seized with the religious passion, and began to devote his great fortune to the endowment of Benedictine cloisters in Sicily and elsewhere. He also transformed his family palace in Rome, on the Celian Hill, into a monastery of the same order, and afterwards withdrew

there himself and apparently took the vows—although the date is uncertain—in the year 575. Then, so the story runs, chancing one day to see in the market some beautiful, fair-haired English boys exposed for sale as slaves, he was moved to exclaim : " Angels, not Angles, these heathen should be called " ; and straightway hurried from the city for the purpose of travelling to Britain and converting the inhabitants to Christianity. But the people of Rome forced the Pope to call him back to them, and on his return the Holy Father appointed him to the office of Deacon. Later on he was sent as Papal *Apocrisarius* (or Nuncio in modern phrase) to Constantinople, where the personal influence he acquired at the Imperial Court was efficiently employed for the good of the Roman Church. Returning to his own country, after some years in the East, he was made Secretary to the Pope, and later on was unanimously elected as his successor. It is said that Gregory did his utmost to escape the enormous responsibility of assuming the triple crown, inasmuch as the Papacy was in a very difficult position at that time ; but he was forced to accept the dignity. Meanwhile Rome was being ravaged by the plague, so in order to implore the Heavenly assistance, Gregory ordered a solemn procession of the whole population, which was continued for three days. It was during this great ceremony that, according to the legend, Gregory beheld an angel on the summit of Hadrian's Tomb, and saw him in the act of sheathing his sword to signify that the people's prayers were granted and the pestilence at an end. In memory of this event, a bronze statue of the Archangel was placed on the summit of the great mausoleum, which then received the name of Castel St. Angelo. But the present statue on it only dates from 1740.

When the imperial sanction had arrived from

Constantinople, the new Pope was consecrated under the name of Gregory I. on the 3rd September, 590, and occupied St. Peter's Chair for fourteen years—that is, to March, 604. He possessed a dual nature, combining the qualities of a contemplative and enthusiastically religious spirit with those of an extremely energetic and practical man : two different and, seemingly, incompatible characters, which, nevertheless, are frequently found united in a single individual. This dual nature may be recognised even in the writings of Gregory I., some of which, as, for instance, the "Dialogues," "Homilies," and "Moral Essays" show his contemplative side; while others have a strictly practical purpose, such as those prescribing rules for the liturgy. These rules were long observed ; and to this day Mass is generally performed according to the rules of Pope Gregory. The reform of sacred music is likewise owed to him, together with the foundation of choir schools for teaching the "plain song" known to us as the Gregorian chant. The fourteen books of his "Epistolæ" form an imperishable monument to his memory and a most valuable contribution to the history of his times. These Epistles teach us to appreciate the lofty character of the man who might be truly called the second founder of the Papacy ; while the writer's practical power, untiring energy, Christian charity, and fervent holiness are brilliantly displayed throughout their pages. They plainly show us why he became the first man of his age, and not only the leader of the Church, but of Italian policy and, to some extent, of the policy of all Europe. He had to manage the administration of the enormous patrimony with which the generosity of the faithful had already enriched the Church throughout Italy, including Sicily and Sardinia. It is impossible to fix the precise

value of the vast estates of the Church, but, according to some writers, they covered an extent of 1,800 square miles, and yielded an income of 7,500,000 Italian *lire*, *i.e.*, £300,000. This enormous revenue was a strong weapon in the Pope's hand, and he used it, not only in the service of the Church, the clergy, and conventual establishments, but in far greater measure for the endowment of hospitals and the relief of the poor. His letters are full of the wisest administrative regulations, and show remarkable tenderness and concern for the welfare of the peasantry. Besides treating of financial and philanthropic subjects, he continually attacks the Longobards in these epistles; seeks to rouse the Italian people to resistance, to the defence of their cities, and sometimes even summons the clergy to fly to arms. And all these manifestations of Gregory's fervid, energetic and youthful zeal occurred in the midst of a world that seemed tottering to ruin on all sides, a world he unceasingly struggled to save, spurred on by his steadfast belief in God and in virtue and by his ardent and inextinguishable enthusiasm for the welfare of mankind. "These are most wretched times," he wrote; "the country is ravaged and desolate, the cities are deserted, the Senate is dead, the people no longer exists, the few remaining survivors are threatened by the sword: we stand in the midst of a ruined world." Yet he was always dauntless, unbending, and full of courage. He showed unconquerable energy in asserting the dignity of the Roman Church in opposition to the Empire, and against the Patriarch of Constantinople, who presumed to usurp the title of Œcumenical Patriarch which solely appertained to the Pope himself as the Head of the Universal Church. But by way of contrast, as it were, he always clung to his earlier title of Servant of Servants, and persistently continued the struggle until victory was achieved.

His letters to the Empress are full of the noblest sayings in favour of the oppressed and in censure of the corrupt administration and excessive exactions of the fiscal authorities. Regarding the latter, he wrote as follows : " Rather than burden the poor with such heavy taxes, that in order to pay them, some are driven to sell their own children as slaves, send us less money for expenditure in Italy, and thus dry the tears of your suffering people." Equally constant and untiring were his efforts to win over the Longobards to the Catholic faith. He employed the services of their Queen Theodelinda, who was already a Catholic, to procure the conversion of her Arian husband, King Agilulf. He used the Archbishop Constantius, whom he had recommended to the Milanese, as a weapon against Arianism in Northern Italy. He did much to spread the diffusion of the orthodox creed among the Franks and even in Spain ; but his chief labours were directed to converting the Anglo-Saxons, to whom he sent his first missionaries in 596 and a second band in 601. He strengthened the unity of the Church by bringing all the bishops into subjection to Rome, and exercising great vigilance in their choice, in order to combat simony and prevent the election of unworthy men, which was a constant source of danger at that period. His encouragement of monasticism also served to augment the Papal power in Italy and elsewhere, inasmuch as the Papacy now began to wield a more direct influence on the religious orders by restricting that exercised by the bishops. At the same time he firmly enforced the rule forbidding youths under eighteen to take monastic vows, or any married man, unless the latter's wife should also adopt the religious life.

In all things Gregory proved himself superior to other

men. On one occasion he reprimanded the Bishop of Terracina for having forcibly expelled the Jews from the places where they celebrated their religious rites, sternly saying that dissenters from the true faith should be won over to Christianity by gentleness and persuasion rather than violence.

In the same year that Gregory I. became Pope the Longobards proceeded to elect a new king. As the chiefs justly appreciated the merits of their widowed Queen Theodelinda, they prayed her to take a second husband fitted to rule the country, adding that, trusting to the excellence of her judgment, they would accept any man she chose as their king. Theodelinda, who had already assumed the reins of government, and quickly shown her political acumen by endeavouring to form an alliance with the Franks, now held counsel with her advisers (*consilium cum prudentibus*) and selected Agilulf, Duke of Turin, a Thuringian by birth, a kinsman of Authari and a handsome, sagacious, valiant youth. Her choice once decided, she frankly went to seek him near Turin. Meeting him at Lumello, she invited him to drink from her own wine cup, after which *cum rubore subridens* she allowed him to kiss her lips and thus declared her purpose. The marriage was celebrated amid general rejoicing, and in May, 591, Agilulf assumed the royal authority and was solemnly proclaimed by the assembled people at Milan.

Agilulf soon found that he had accepted a very difficult position. The Franks threatened him on one side, the Byzantines on the other, while the Pope just elected in Rome was a strenuous opponent of foreigners and Arians, and had great power over the Italian people. If these three enemies should actually conclude an agreement, the Longobards would be driven to flight across the Alps. Fortunately, however, the foes were not in concert, nor was it possible for them to come to terms.

The Pope was dissatisfied with the Byzantines and the Italian people openly disgusted with them. The Franks were continually paralysed by sanguinary civil wars, although whenever these ceased for a while they were easily persuaded to join the Byzantines in attacking the Longobards. But since they as well as the Byzantines desired exclusive possession of Italy, whenever they were on the point of crushing the Longobards fresh discord broke out between them, and each of the two allies tried to side with the common foe to the other's hurt. Thus a sort of temporary balance of power was formed which gave Agilulf some chance of securing the safety of his kingdom. Only, there were internal troubles to be dealt with in addition to dangers from abroad. Some of the Dukes, feeling defrauded of their hopes of ascending the throne, were now on the verge of rebellion. Many others, and especially the very powerful border magnates, were thirsting for more independent power, and therefore also on the eve of revolt.

Agilulf, however, held his course so cautiously and shrewdly amid all these serious complications, that he not only preserved his throne, but, as Ranke justly remarks, became the real founder of the Longobard kingdom. First of all he carried out Theodelinda's wise plan and succeeded in concluding a treaty with the Franks, of which the exact terms are unknown to us. But we do know that there was peace between the two nations for a considerable time. Nevertheless the whole merit of this agreement must not be attributed to Agilulf alone. King Childebert, who had united Austrasia and Burgundy under his own rule, died in 596, leaving two infant sons to share his kingdom between them, so that Neustria was now a separate State. Thus before long the Franks were once more plunged in civil war, and the Longobard King took advantage of it to arrangè a peace with them that left

him free to devote himself to the task of subduing the rebel Dukes, and settling the affairs of his kingdom before beginning a vigorous attack on the Byzantines.

First of all, he marched against Mimulf, Duke of the Isle of St. Julian, on the Lake of Orta, defeated him in battle, and put him to death. He then attacked Gaidulf, the very powerful Duke of Bergamo, and after routing his force made peace with him; later on, however, while fighting with Duke Ulfari of Treviso, Gaidulf again rose to arms against his king. But as soon as Agilulf had worsted Ulfari and cast him into prison, he went in pursuit of the treacherous Gaidulf, who had withdrawn to an island fortress on the Lake of Como (*Insula Comacina*). After capturing the isle and carrying off the treasures stored in it, Agilulf pursued the fugitive Duke to Bergamo, again defeated him and took him prisoner. Every one expected to see him put to death, but Agilulf, being a true statesman, controlled his wrath and spared the rebel's life; for he recognised the danger of exciting the enmity of this great magnate's powerful clan. Next, he turned his attention to Benevento, in order to enforce the authority of the Crown in that too independent Duchy. Its Duke, Zotto, had just died, and in the usual course of things one of his kinsmen would have been chosen to succeed him; but Agilulf, in order to prevent the Duchy from becoming a totally independent and hereditary State, appointed Arichis, a Longobard noble of Friuli, as the late Duke's successor.

The Dukedom of Spoleto, though smaller than that of Benevento, was of great importance owing to its geographical position. Being situated on the Flaminian Way running from Rome to Rimini, whence another road formed a line of communication with Ravenna, Spoleto stood between Rome and the Pentapolis, and was a continual menace to the Eternal City.

In fact, just about this time Pope Gregory complained bitterly to the Emperor regarding the conduct of the Exarch Romanus, who, although a brave soldier, left him exposed to hostile attacks, without stirring a step in his defence, so that he (the Pope) had to provide for every emergency unaided. He therefore implored the Emperor to finally assume the defence of the Italian cause (*causa Italiæ*). "I no longer know," Gregory added, "whether I now fill the office of a shepherd or of a temporal prince. I have to provide for the defence of the city, to arrange every detail; I have to be paymaster to the soldiery." In fact, it was the Pope who repaired the walls and planned the defence; he was the leading spirit of the war both within and without the gates of Rome; it was he who warned the captains of the militia to keep a vigilant watch on the movements of the Spoleto troops. He sent soldiers to several cities with letters bidding them defend the walls under the command of the *Magister Militum* (27th September, 591). With another epistle of about the same date, addressed to the *Clero, ordini et plebi consistenti Nepæ*, he sent the *clarissimum Leontium* to defend the town of Nepi. In June, 592, he sent written instructions regarding the conduct of the war to two Masters of the Soldiery, in the tone of a superior officer addressing his subalterns. During the same year, on learning that the unarmed city of Naples was threatened by a concerted attack from Benevento and Spoleto, Gregory despatched there the "Magnificent Tribune" Constantius with orders that he should be put in command of the soldiery to organise the defence of the city. Meanwhile, without receiving any succour either in men or money from the Exarch, Gregory had to prepare to resist Duke Ariulf of Spoleto, who was advancing to lay siege to Rome. The Pope wrote to the Bishop of Ravenna saying:—"The regular troops stationed here have deserted the city

because their pay was in arrears, while the other soldiers can be barely persuaded to guard the walls. There is nothing to be done save to make peace with the Longobards. For Rome, it is now a question of life or death."

Assuming, accordingly, the sole responsibility, almost as though he were the lawful head and legitimate representative of the Roman Dukedom, he concluded a peace with Ariulf.

The Exarch was furious at this, and accused the Pope of unlawfully exercising sovereign power, as though independent of the Emperor. Henceforth, he declared, Ariulf, being safe from attack in the rear, could at any time march on Ravenna in junction with Agilulf. But, in the autumn of 592, the Exarch assembled the forces that he had hitherto feigned to be unable to gather, and advanced towards Central Italy, capturing Perugia, Todi, Orte, and Sutri, which were all in Longobard hands. Accordingly, whether willingly or unwillingly, the Pope was obliged to favour this war, in spite of having made peace with the foe. Thus his pact with the Longobards was broken ; and in May, 593, Agilulf marched in person upon Rome. After crossing the Po, he despatched some of his Italian prisoners to Gaul to be sold as slaves ; others whom he had mutilated, escaped to Rome. Thereupon the Pope was obliged to announce solemnly to the people that he must suspend his course of sermons on Ezekiel in order to attend to the war.

"No one can blame us," he said, "if we cease from preaching in the midst of all these tribulations, when we are surrounded by foemen's swords. Some of our Italians have come back to us deprived of their hands ; others have been seized, chained, and sold as slaves ; others again slaughtered !" Meanwhile Agilulf had already recaptured Perugia and killed the Duke Maurice, who, after formerly holding that city for the Longobards,

had betrayed it to the Byzantines, and had held it for them. King Agilulf then proceeded to invest Rome, and although the incidents of this siege are very imperfectly known, it would appear that, owing to the resistance the citizens were nerved to make by the Pope, to the outbreak of malarious fever in the Campagna during the heats, and partly also to the still unquelled revolt of the Dukes in Upper Italy, Agilulf was finally compelled to withdraw to the north, where he reduced in turn every rebel to subjection.

In the midst of all these events the Pope had become the leading personage in Italy, for he represented the interests of the nation, and its whole history seemed to be centred in this man, the giant of his age, who raised the Papacy to unexpected grandeur, and faced every danger with truly marvellous courage. It was impossible for him to be at peace with the Longobards, who were rapacious foreign barbarians of the Arian creed and enemies of all that was Roman. Neither could he be in agreement with the Byzantines on account of the perpetual religious strife with Constantinople and the continual efforts of that Court to keep the Church in subjection to the Empire. The Patriarch Joannes obstinately retained the title of Œcumenical Patriarch, and the Emperor had issued a new edict prohibiting all holders of administrative posts from accepting ecclesiastical appointments or taking monastic vows. The Pope energetically protested against this decree. Then, too, the persistent tendency to independent action shown by the priesthood of Ravenna was now encouraged by the Exarch Romanus, of whom Gregory wrote that "he behaved worse than the Longobards: thus the enemies who slay us seem more merciful than the representatives of the Republic who, although bound to protect us, gradually destroy us, on the contrary, by their malignity and rapine." Accordingly, he tried every means of in-

fluencing the Emperor and the Exarch; employed the Archbishop of Milan for that purpose, and even had recourse to Queen Theodelinda. As a matter of fact, he could not desire that either Byzantines or Longobards should attain complete victory or predominance. Therefore he would have preferred them to come to an agreement whereby a balance of power might be established that would emancipate the Church from their tyrannous claims.

Agilulf, being also involved in a tangle of difficulties, seemed disposed, for his part, to make amicable terms with the Pope; but the latter, warned by the result of his agreement with Ariulf, now shrank from the risk of provoking a fresh crisis. Hence he suffered increasing distress of mind, and frequently complained in his letters that with this perpetual anxiety he could neither find time to read nor write. *Tantis tribulationibus premor, ut mihi neque legere, neque per epistolas multa loqui liceat.* Worse still, he was assailed by calumnious charges of every description, and even accused before the Emperor of having murdered a bishop. Then his patience gave way, and he wrote as follows:—"Had I wished to commit bloody deeds, by this time the Longobard nation would have neither kings, dukes, nor counts, and be reduced to utter confusion. But I fear God, and shrink from staining my hands with any man's blood." The Emperor had likewise charged him with incapacity and presumption in his dealings with the Longobards. So, in his letter of the 5th June, 595, the Pope indignantly asked: "What means this? My peace with Ariulf was broken by your withdrawing your troops and leaving me alone to face Agilulf. I have been forced to see Romans captured, chained up like dogs, and sent off to France to be sold into bondage. The Emperor should have only looked to the facts, and never lent belief to the

words of my foes." He appealed to Jesus Christ as witness to the truth of his assertion. Meanwhile, the Longobards of Spoleto and Benevento were continually extending their raids in Southern Italy, pillaging and conquering wherever they appeared; and as the people received neither aid nor encouragement from any one excepting the Pope, his importance and authority were greatly enhanced, and he was recognised by the whole population as their true and legitimate head.

In 595, the general aspect of affairs was somewhat altered by the death of Joannes, the Patriarch of Constantinople, the main cause of all the strife in the Church. Ciriacus, his successor, proved more acceptable to the Pope. Soon after this event Romanus the Exarch also died, and was succeeded by *Kallinicus* (a name corrupted into *Gallinicus*), who was likewise much more favourable to Gregory. These changes would have greatly facilitated negotiations for a general peace with the Longobards but for unexpected obstacles raised by the Dukes of Benevento and Spoleto, who, desirous of retaining their independence of action, would only sign the treaty under certain special conditions which they presumed to impose. Accordingly, all that could be done in 599 was to patch up a two months' truce instead of a genuine peace. And, as Pope Gregory had already foreseen when he said "a peace will be made that will bring no peace," this truce was broken before the time fixed for its expiration, and could not be renewed. In 601, the Exarch was the first to begin hostilities, but Agilulf promptly retorted by attempting to set fire to Padua, which he afterwards captured and destroyed. The Avars were his auxiliaries in this war, and he added to their force a band of Italian artizans, members, probably, of the ancient *scholæ*, or trade guilds for ship-building work, *ad faciendas naves*. The general confusion was heightened by the fact that while the Avars attacked the

Empire on one side and devastated Istria, the Longobards of Spoleto on the other had several encounters with the Imperial forces of Ravenna.

But the most important and remarkable change took place at Constantinople, where the Emperor Maurice had become extremely unpopular owing to the severe discipline he enforced in the army. In the year 600 the Avars offered to let him ransom the 12,000 prisoners they had taken, and put them all to death when he firmly declined to pay for their release. This niggardliness roused much dissatisfaction among his subjects. Some years later, when he ordered the troops to pass the Danube and take up winter quarters across the river, the discontent of the soldiery rose to so high a pitch that a revolution broke out and Phocas was proclaimed emperor. This man was a monster of cruelty, and soon displayed his real character. In November, 602, he had his predecessor put to death, after causing the latter's children to be slaughtered before his eyes. Then, however, his attention being claimed by the Persian war, he decided to make peace with the Avars, recalled the Exarch who had provoked an outburst of hostility even in Italy, sent Smaragdus back there in his place, and published a decree recognising the Papal supremacy. Thereupon Gregory wrote him a letter of congratulation in which, after expressing all good wishes for his prosperity, he went on to say that "the very angels of Heaven would sing hymns of praise to the Lord" for the election of the new emperor. This missive has always been an indelible stain on the great Pope's career, for although Phocas undoubtedly helped to promote the triumph of the Church—the one supreme aim to which Gregory the Great invariably sacrificed all else—yet the Pope cannot be pardoned for expressing his joy at the accession of such a monster of iniquity. It should be remembered,

however, that the official language of the period was extremely inflated, especially in the East, and revelled in high-sounding phrases. Also, it has never been precisely ascertained if the Pope had been fully informed, before writing that letter, of the Emperor's cruel slaughter of innocents.

As we have previously observed, even Agilulf was brought under the influence of the Pope's iron will by the agency of his high-souled, Catholic wife, Queen Theodelinda, whose reputation survived her and who erected several celebrated public buildings in Monza and elsewhere. A fresh proof of the Papal influence was seen at Easter-time in 603, when Agilulf caused his baby son Adalwald (born about the end of 602) to be baptized a Catholic. Some writers maintain that the King himself was likewise converted ; but we only know for certain that he showed great favour to the Catholics. Besides, the general conversion of the Longobards, resulting from Gregory's zeal and the Queen's powerful help, was already in progress. But these changes neither deterred Agilulf from pursuing his conquests, nor the Pope from becoming increasingly hostile to him in political matters. After gaining possession of Monselice, the Longobard monarch pushed on towards Ravenna ; and it seems to be certain that, on this occasion, the Pope tried hard to induce the Pisans to come to the Exarch's assistance. There is a passage in one of his letters in which he says that no confidence can be placed in the Pisans, inasmuch as they had already prepared their fastest galleys (*dromoni*) in order to push out to sea and only employ them for their own profit. So apparently the Pisans were already organised in the guise of an independent municipality, with the power of deciding for themselves whether it suited them to take part in a war. However this may be, Agilulf, again assisted by the Avars, stormed and destroyed

Cremona, took Mantua, demolished its walls, and pursued the same course with other towns until Smaragdus agreed to a peace that was to last from September, 603, to April, 605.

By this time Gregory's health was much weakened by the infirmities of age; although, judging from his letters, his prodigious mental activity must have gone on increasing to the very last. He never desisted from urging all to give help to wretched Italy (*misera Italia*), and continually laboured for her good amid physical sufferings of every kind. In 600, he wrote saying that: "For eleven months the gout has only allowed me to leave my bed once in a while. My life is such that death will come to me as a blessing." Then, in another epistle, he says: "The pain sometimes diminishes, but never ceases entirely; still it has not yet managed to kill me!" One of his last letters was written in January, 604, shortly before his death, to order the despatch of clothes and warm coverings to a very needy bishop who was suffering from the cold, and whom he earnestly recommended to the benevolence of his colleagues. Gregory died soon afterwards, on the 11th of March, and was buried in St. Peter's.

In the same year (604), King Agilulf being anxious to prevent any dispute as to the succession, caused his son Adalwald to be proclaimed at Milan as heir to the Crown, though only aged two years at the time. The ceremony took place in the presence of the Longobard chiefs and of the Ambassador of the Frankish King, Theudibert, whose daughter was then betrothed to the juvenile heir of the Longobard throne as a token of perpetual peace and friendship between the two nations.

In 605, peace was concluded with the Exarch, and was afterwards renewed for a longer term, until 612. Meanwhile Phocas had been succeeded by Heraclius (610–41),

who was quickly absorbed in the Persian war. Also Smaragdus, who had twice filled the post of Exarch, was succeeded in that office by a certain Joannes, towards the year 611.

Italy now seemed assured of a period of tranquillity, but, precisely at that moment, the Longobards' former allies, the Avars, made a fierce attack on Gisulf, Duke of Friuli, who, after vigorously resisting the invaders, was killed in battle with the greater part of his men, leaving a widowed wife, named Romilda, and eight children. Thereupon Romilda, her children, and other survivors, mainly composed of aged folk, women, and infants, took refuge within the walls of Forum Julii (Cividale in Friuli). Four of Gisulf's orphaned progeny were girls, the other four, boys, but only two of these, Taso and Caco, were adults; the others being very young. The city was speedily besieged by the Avars, under the command of their Chagan. The legend runs that this Avar chief being a young and handsome man, Romilda fell in love with him at first sight, and infatuated by her passion, offered to open the gates to him if he would make her his wife. The Chagan promised to do so, entered the city, plundered and burnt it, and seizing all the wretched inhabitants, divided them among his tribe. As regarded Romilda, after doing his will with her, he passed her on to his officers, and subsequently caused her to be impaled, declaring that such was the only marriage deserved by so treacherous a woman. Meanwhile her three elder sons leapt on their horses in order to escape by flight. But first of all they determined to kill their younger brother Grimwald to save him from falling into the enemy's hands. But the child cried to the one who had already drawn his sword: "Pray spare me, for I too can stick on a horse;" and springing into the saddle, he followed his brethren.

But he could not ride fast enough, so was overtaken and captured by one of the Avars. But the latter had not the heart to kill this beautiful, fair child with lint-white hair, and merely seized his bridle in order to lead him to the camp. Suddenly, however, the lad drew his little sword and slashed so vigorously at his captor's head that the man fell to the ground and left him free to gallop after his brothers. Meanwhile Gisulf's daughters had remained in the enemy's power, and in order to preserve their honour adopted the expedient of hiding bits of rotten meat on their persons so that the stench of it prevented the Avars from approaching them. This fantastic story contains, however, a core of truth, *i.e.*, that the Avars invaded Istria, wasted Friuli, killed Duke Gisulf, captured Cividale, and then withdrew because Agilulf was advancing against them. The elder sons, Taso and Caco, were enabled to assume the government of Friuli, but ultimately perished by treason ; while the other couple, being too young to reign, took refuge with Duke Arichis of Benevento, who was by birth a Friulese and a kinsman of their own. Indeed, Arichis had formerly lived with them as their preceptor, and now welcomed them to his home and treated them as his own children.

In 615 or 616, Agilulf died at Milan, after reigning for twenty-five years, and, as we have seen, after having settled the succession on his son Adalwald, who was now aged twelve. Accordingly, the boy's mother Theodelinda virtually ruled the country, continued to labour ardently in diffusing the Catholic faith and also in promoting culture, particularly architecture, among the Longobards. Thus the way was smoothed for their complete fusion with the Romans. She made generous donations to the churches, many of which were built by her order, including the famous Basilica of San Giovanni at

Monza adjoining the palace that owed its erection to Theodoric. Theodelinda not only restored and enlarged this palace, but adorned it with frescoes, which enabled Paulus Diaconus to give us a detailed description of the Longobard attire. Later on a real treasure hoard was collected in the Basilica, including three specially valuable and interesting crowns. One of these, studded with precious stones and with sculptured figures of Christ and the apostles, bore an inscription to the effect that it was the offering of Agilulf, *Rex totius Italiæ;* the which inclines us to believe that it dates from a later period, as there is no reason to suppose that Agilulf ever assumed that title. Napoleon transported this crown to Paris, where it was stolen and lost for good. The second crown, likewise of later date, is of slight interest. The third, on the contrary, is the highly celebrated Iron Crown, and has gained that name because within the chased golden circlet, enamelled with fruits, flowers, and twenty-two jewels, chiefly emeralds and pearls, there is a thin hoop of iron, said to be formed of one of the nails used to fasten Jesus Christ to the cross. Legend declares that Agilulf wore this crown at his coronation, and undoubtedly it was long used by later kings of Italy.

A notable incident of Agilulf's and Theodelinda's reign was their protection of St. Columbanus, who played so distinguished a part in the history of the Church and of human culture. This Saint was born about 543, in Ireland, where Christianity had been received with the most impassioned enthusiasm. Thanks to Irish cloisters the Christian cult progressed at a truly marvellous rate, and became diffused throughout Europe. Moved by his fervour for proselytism, St. Columbanus went to settle in France, but was soon expelled for having sternly censured the conduct of the sovereigns of that land, who, although Catholics, were ferociously cruel. But he found

a quiet refuge at Bregenz, on the Lake of Constance. After a short time, he moved farther on towards the south, leaving behind as his representative in Switzerland one of his Irish disciples, St. Gallus, from whom both the Canton he inhabited and the celebrated Abbey of St. Gall derived their name. St. Columbanus arrived in Italy about 613, and although he continued to write against the Arians, was heartily welcomed by Agilulf and Theodelinda. He founded the monastery of Bobbio, together with the famous collection of MSS. now scattered over the Vatican, Ambrosian and Turin libraries, which proves with what loving devotion the founder and his followers promoted the study of classic lore. From the manner in which Agilulf protected this Saint, and allowed him to convert his two sons to Catholicism, from the generous donations he bestowed on Catholic churches, and from his invariable kindness to Catholic bishops, formerly much persecuted by the Longobards, we are disposed to think that Paulus Diaconus had good ground for his belief that the King also accepted the Catholic faith. Nevertheless, most historians are opposed to this idea, and maintain that his conduct may be chiefly attributed to his Longobard lukewarmness, or rather indifference concerning religion, to Theodelinda's powerful influence over him, and to the effect of Pope Gregory's all-masterful will.

## CHAPTER V

ROTHARI, KING OF THE LOMBARDS — THE EMPEROR HERACLIUS—THE PERSIAN WAR—MAHOMET—THE "ECTHESIS"—ROTHARI'S EDICT

ITALY was now to pass through a double crisis. Two great men, Agilulf and Pope Gregory I., had disappeared from the world's stage. The already-begun conversion of the Longobards had sown discord among the people, and speedily caused a rebellion that drove their youthful King, the Catholic Adalwald, from the throne, and compelled him to seek safety in Ravenna. He was succeeded by the Arian Ariwald in 625. Very little is known of this king, although he reigned for several years; and nothing is recorded of Theodelinda's thoughts and deeds during that period. Possibly, she remained a passive spectator of the changed course of things. Her life ended in 628, and Ariwald, who had taken her daughter Gundeberga to wife, died about the year 636. As in Theodelinda's case, the widowed Queen was empowered to choose a second husband who was to be made king, and proved equally fortunate in her choice. For the king she raised to the throne was the lawgiver of the Longobard nation.

Meanwhile, the Empire being reduced to sore straits by the Persian war, which had now assumed formidable proportions, the central government was not only unable to send aid to Ravenna, but was continually changing the Exarchs there to prevent them from aspiring to

independent power. In fact, Smaragdus had been replaced by Joannes, whose real name—according to some writers —was that of *Lemigius Thrax* (611–16), and who was succeeded by a certain Euleterius (616-20), who attempted to rule the Exarchate in his own name. Thereupon, his soldiers revolted, slew him and sent his head to Constantinople, whence they soon received a new Exarch in return.

Meanwhile, Italy naturally felt the effects of the very critical state of things in the Empire. The Emperor Phocas, whose cruel reign had been disturbed by a series of conspiracies, and in whose honour Smaragdus erected the famous column in the Roman Forum, had breathed his last on the 5th October, 610. His successor, Heraclius (610–41) was a true Oriental, subject to alternations of exaggerated activity and extraordinary indolence. In fact, during the first ten years after his accession to the throne, he seemed to be a careless spectator of the rapid advance of the Persians and their allies the Avars. Nevertheless, the danger was really pressing, seeing that the Persians occupied Syria, entered Damascus, pushed on into Palestine, captured Jerusalem itself, with all the holy places (614–15), and even carried off the sacred timbers of the Cross. After this they advanced into Egypt and threatened to move further on. None could foresee where the Empire's disasters would stop. The very city of Constantinople seemed threatened by the foe, yet even then Heraclius remained motionless, as though he were paralysed with terror. At one time (618) there seems to have been some idea of transferring the capital to Carthage, in the hope of finding it a better point of defence for the Empire.

But at this moment everything suddenly changed. The threatened loss of the capital roused the political, religious, and public spirit of Constantinople. Even

Heraclius finally awoke from his lethargy and realised that he had to conduct a great war and fight in defence of the faith as well as the Empire, in order to free Jerusalem and the holy relics from the profane hands of Fire-worshippers. He seemed a new man at that time. After concluding in 620 a two years' truce with the Avars, he prepared for war with feverish haste. In 622 he set out at the head of his army, and like a new Belisarius won a series of victories over the Persians in 622–25, driving them to withdraw to the shores of the Black Sea, where they established their winter quarters. Then their Prince, Chosroes, prepared for a desperate effort, and concluded a pact with the Bulgarians, Slaves, and Avars. The latter, with the Chagan at their head, made a fierce onslaught on Constantinople, while the Persians simultaneously attacked Heraclius with equal fury. But the people, priesthood, and soldiery of Constantinople defended the walls with desperate valour, and must have won a signal victory, since there is no further mention of Avar attacks. It seems that Heraclius had already decided to get rid of that tribe, and therefore showed more favour to the Slaves. Certainly, from that moment the Avars gradually disappeared almost entirely from history, whereas the far more numerous Slave tribes now pushed to the front, occupying first the Balkan peninsula and then spreading over other regions towards Central Europe. Heraclius pursued his victories, until the often defeated and humiliated Chosroes was deposed and killed by his rebellious people in 628. His son succeeded him on the Persian throne, made peace with the Empire, gave up all the territories his father had won, released all the prisoners of war, and restored the beams of the Holy Cross. So Heraclius re-entered Constantinople in triumph, and the following year carried back the precious relics to the church of the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem.

Of all the wars waged during the prolonged struggle with Persia, this campaign led by Heraclius was certainly the most successful, and seemed also decisive. Nevertheless it threw a stronger light on the inherent weakness of the Eastern Empire, which, although imbued with the Greek spirit, pursued a Roman policy, and comprised a medley of heterogeneous provinces. The rapid advance of the Persians at the outset of the war had plainly shown the lack of cohesion between the different provinces. Many of them having never assimilated with the Empire, were easily detached from it. A great war had been required for their re-conquest, and accordingly other regions better amalgamated with the Empire and of more vital importance to it had been left undefended and exposed to the invasions of other barbaric tribes. A similar experience had occurred in the days of the Emperor Justinian, who in his wars for the recovery of Africa, Italy, and Spain, had neglected the defence of Thrace, Macedonia, and Greece, which were consequently overrun by Bulgarians, Avars, and Slavonian tribes. The same fact, only on a larger scale, was repeated under Heraclius. For although the Avars had disappeared from the stage, the Slavonians, hitherto only acting as their allies and fellow-combatants, now flooded the Balkan peninsula and poured into Greece, Dalmatia, Istria, and Carniola. The respective fate of these two tribes, the Finnish Avars and the far more numerous Indo-European Slaves, much resembles that of the Huns and the Germans. The former, likewise of Finnish origin, began by disputing and overriding the power of the latter, who, subsequently combining with the Romans, succeeded in routing and driving them away, whereupon the Huns almost entirely disappeared. In the same way the Avars, who at first seemed to dominate the Slaves, were subsequently absorbed and assimilated by the latter. Certainly, no mention is made of them for a

long period, but they reappeared in Charlemagne's time and were totally defeated by him. Almost all these Turanian Finnish races rush upon the scene with the irresistible fury of hurricanes. But although nothing can check their first advance, they find great difficulty in establishing a permanent footing, and soon breaking up, scatter and vanish with the speed with which they had previously gathered together. The Ungari, known as Magyars and Hungarians, however, afterwards form a notable exception to the above-mentioned rule. They came to Europe at a much later date, and even at the present day are still, as it were, a strong, compact island in the midst of Aryan races.

At any rate, it is certain that neither Justinian's campaigns nor the victories of Heraclius achieved any lasting effect, seeing that the provinces they reconquered were abandoned altogether in the end. During the seventh and eighth centuries the efforts of the Empire were devoted to regaining and preserving those which had been best assimilated and were most homogeneous. The process of disintegration that Heraclius had so triumphantly arrested was resumed before the close of his reign. And the fact of its repetition showed that it was of no transitory nature.

In those days precursory symptoms had already appeared of an important politico-religious event, destined to create deep disturbance both in the East and the West.

In 628, Mahomet the Arabian began to diffuse his new doctrine by word of mouth and force of arms. It was a Monotheistic doctrine, that avoided all subtle theories and philosophic disputes concerning the Trinity or the dual nature of Jesus Christ, whom Mahomet regarded as his own predecessor. The theological questions by which the Greek mind was so stirred and inflamed were nowise adapted to the wits of the people in other parts of the Empire. Besides, the new religion recognised no distinc-

tion between different classes of society, inasmuch as Mahomet proclaimed that all men were equal, "even as the teeth of a comb;" promising an eternal paradise in the next world, with every sensual delight to those who fought and gave their lives for the faith; while he inculcated a fatalism that made men indifferent to the danger of death. It is undoubted that the religious exaltation of the Arabs and Saracens (the latter name was applied by the Byzantines to all who professed the Mussulman creed) soon rose to an extraordinary pitch. After Mahomet's decease in 632, the Arab tribes, warlike by nature, trained in the desert to a perpetually militant life, and led by the Califs who succeeded the Prophet, rapidly passed from conquest to conquest, and regained all the territories which the Persians had occupied until expelled from them by Heraclius. In 635, they captured Antioch; in 637, Jerusalem; Mesopotamia in 638; and Egypt between 639 and 640. The Emperor Heraclius had apparently relapsed into his former apathy, and after making a feeble and inefficient resistance, died in 641, when the Empire had lost for ever all its possessions beyond the Taurus.

Conversion to the Mussulman faith had heralded and paved the way for the Mussulman conquest, and both were facilitated by the character of the Eastern people. Egypt, Mesopotamia, and Armenia had always opposed the doctrines of the Council of Chalcedon regarding the Trinity and the dual nature of Christ. As we have already seen, they had constantly inclined to the Monophysitic creed which solely recognised the divinity of Jesus Christ, in which, they maintained, His human nature was totally absorbed. This refusal to acknowledge the dual nature of the Saviour disposed them to favour the Mussulman Monotheism which rejected as useless all controversy on the Trinity; hence they were easily

converted to the new faith. Thereupon religious dissension quickly changed into political conflict because the Mussulman converts called the Arabs to help them against the Empire. Heraclius had foreseen that the new religion would be a source of danger, and had tried to check its progress. Enlisting the aid of the Patriarch Sergius, he declared himself in favour of the Monothelite doctrine, which, although admitting the dual nature of Christ, declares Him to have only one will. By this species of compromise, for which he hoped to obtain the sanction of Rome, he endeavoured to conciliate the Monophysites so as to prevent their separation from the Empire. Pope Honorius would seem to have abetted the scheme, since he pronounced the controversy as to the Saviour's single or dual will to be an idle grammatical dispute. Nevertheless, the spirit of the Catholic Church, always most intolerant of compromises of this kind, was more opposed than ever to allowing religious disputes to be decided by the Emperor, and especially so when his decision was inspired by political motives. Encouraged by the attitude of the Pope, Heraclius published in 638 his *Ecthesis*, a declaration of faith prohibiting all further discussion on the dual will of Jesus Christ, seeing that His two natures could have only one will. This decree, however, raised such a storm of opposition in Italy that even Pope Honorius might have been forced to condemn the *Ecthesis* had he not died before it reached Rome.

Thus the old discord between Rome and Constantinople was flaming anew, and became more fiercely heated when the Exarch Isaac came to the Eternal City and carried off the Lateran treasure under the pretext that it was required for the soldiers' pay, since no supplies came from Constantinople. When the new Pope Severinus was chosen in 640 it was resolved not to sanction his election

unless he accepted the *Ecthesis;* but the Emperor was soon obliged to acknowledge that the election was valid, although Severinus proclaimed his firm adherence to the Chalcedon doctrine. This Pope, however, only reigned a few months, and was succeeded, in the same year, by John IV., who promptly convoked a Council, which absolutely condemned the Monothelite doctrine, though not only omitting to mention Pope Honorius, whom the Church naturally sought to shield, but also without any reference to the Emperor Heraclius or the Patriarch Sergius. Nevertheless, the Monothelite dispute went on for another hundred years, and so the *Ecthesis* had only served to increase discord by adding a new schism to those already in existence, even as the *Henotikon* controversy had done in the past.

Undoubtedly, therefore, at the death of Heraclius in 641, the Empire, exposed to more and more violent attacks from the Mussulmans, and increasingly divided by theological quarrels, was in a state of the utmost confusion. Hence King Rothari had nothing to fear from the East. But there was no lack of civil discord even among the Longobards, who were in a period of transition, now that so many of them had been converted to the Catholic faith. The Brescian Duke Rothari had been raised to the throne by his marriage with Gundeberga, the widow of King Ariwald, who died in 636, but as he was an Arian and his queen a Catholic they cannot have enjoyed much domestic peace. For the division between the two creeds was so marked that, according to Paulus Diaconus, some towns possessed both an Arian and a Catholic bishop. The new king inaugurated his reign by killing many nobles who were opposed to him. He also behaved very harshly to his Catholic wife and kept her imprisoned for five years in his palace at Pavia. Whether religious differences or other motives

led to this cruelty is unknown. The unlucky woman was finally released by the intercession of Clodovic II., king of the Franks, and devoted the rest of her life to religion and charity, and restored the Basilica of St. John at Pavia, in which she was afterwards interred.

Notwithstanding the disturbed state of his own kingdom, Rothari feared no molestation from the Empire, which was increasingly shaken by Mussulman attacks, and accordingly turned his safety in that direction to account by extending his dominions in Lunigiana and pushing on through Liguria to the Frankish border towards Marseilles. He then proceeded to attack the Byzantines near Oderzo, and in a pitched battle on the banks of the Panaro routed them so thoroughly that, according to Paulus Diaconus, 8,000 of the army they had gathered from Ravenna and Rome perished in the field.

The same year (641) witnessed the death of Arichis, the Duke of Benevento, a sturdy warrior who by force of arms had won fresh territories in Samnium, Campania, Apulia, Lucania, and Bruttii. It may have been at this time that Salerno was also annexed. Thus the northern borders of the Duchy of Benevento marched with those of Spoleto, and the States of the Church comprised nearly the whole of Southern Italy and acquired increased independence. As previously noted, the Duke had given shelter to Rodwald and Grimwald, the two elder sons of his kinsman Gisulf, when they escaped from the massacre perpetrated by the Avars in Friuli. It was the dying wish of Duke Arichis that one of these young men should succeed to his dukedom in preference to his own son Aio, who seemed half imbecile, in consequence, it was said, of a poisoned draught administered to him by the Exarch. Nevertheless, Aio succeeded his father, but was soon killed (641) in an encounter with the Slavonians,

who made a descent on Sipontum from Dalmatia. Rodwald avenged his death by slaying most of the pirates and driving the rest across the sea. He then became Duke of Benevento, but died in 647, and was succeeded by Grimwald, who retained the ducal power to the year 662. Both the brothers were valiant captains, but we have few particulars of Rodwald's brief career. We do not even know whether he attended the great assembly at Pavia in 643, where King Rothari's celebrated Edict was formally confirmed ; and it is also unknown whether the said Edict was then enforced in the Duchy of Benevento as well. But of Grimwald's after career we shall have much to say later on.

The Edict of 643 is decidedly the most notable event of Rothari's reign, which ended in 652. It is a most important historic monument and constitutes an act of truly independent sovereignty. For the first time a barbarian had dared to legislate for Italy without regard to the Empire and without any reference—at least so far as he knew—to Roman law. As King Rothari states in the introduction to his Code, he had merely caused all the usages already observed by his people to be collected and written down, and had endeavoured to complete and amend them by excising superfluous matter. This we have done "by the advice and consent of the First Lords (*Primates*), our Judges, and of all our most faithful army." These judges and *Primates* were the *Gasindi*, dukes, and *Gastaldi* who acted as military leaders in war and as judges in times of peace ; while, according to barbarian custom, the army consisted of the Longobard people in arms. The custom of taking counsel with the chieftains and the people on all affairs of public importance was of old origin among all Germanic races, as even Tacitus had learnt. This custom, however, had lost its primitive significance, and, owing to the exceptional

social conditions of the Longobards and their thoroughly military organisation, had been consequently reduced to little more than a matter of form. The *Primates* no longer discussed affairs ; they merely proffered opinions or advice, while the people had only to express their approval.

King Rothari's Edict or Code is certainly one of the best compilations of barbarian laws. This may be attributed to the fact that the other barbarian tribes put their laws and usages in writing shortly after being annexed to the Empire, whereas the Longobards wrote theirs at a much later date. Yet, although unaware of it themselves, the indirect influence of Roman law can be traced in these Longobard laws, and is shown not only by the Latin tongue in which they are indited, but by the use of some completely Justinianic phrases, by the somewhat systematic order according to which the laws are arranged, and by certain provisions that cannot possibly be of Germanic origin. The Edict consists of 388 chapters, the last twelve of which appear to have been added at a later date.[1] It deals first of all with offences against the State, and personages of the State ; next with the laws of inheritance, degrees of kindred, and the division of property ; but it scarcely alluded to political rights.

There has been much dispute as to whether this Code was only enforced among the Longobards or among the Romans as well. Barbarian laws in general had a racial character ; that is, they belonged exclusively to the people by whom they were written, and who transported them

[1] Others were added by Grimwald in 668, and many more by Liutprand, who, between the years 713 and 735, published 153 laws, which had been passed by fifteen Assemblies, gathered together from Austria, Neustria (*i.e.*, the eastern and western provinces of the kingdom), and Tuscia. Certain other chapters were promulgated by Rachis and by Astolf, the last of the law-giving Longobard kings. (*Vide* Bluhme, in the "Monumenta Germanica.")

wheresoever they went. But the laws of the Longobards, as likewise of certain other races, also bore a territorial character, inasmuch as they applied to all tribes who had entered Italy in company with the Longobards. Some writers consider this proved by the fact that the Saxons were driven from the country because they wished to live in pursuance of their own laws and institutions. In the preface to his Edict, King Rothari declares that he has compiled it for the promotion of justice, for love of his subjects, and without drawing any distinction between them. These words would seem to indicate that the Longobard law held good for Romans as well as for his own people ; which, as we know, is a much-contested point. One or two clauses of the Edict undoubtedly hint at the existence of other legal systems differing from that of the Longobards ; and, indeed, had the Roman law been entirely abolished, it seems incredible that so important a fact should have been passed over without being definitely recorded. Nor is it conceivable that the Longobards could be able, no matter how willing, to annihilate a system that had been rooted in the country for ages, establishing among the conquered Italians a number of legal obligations, many of which were so completely unknown to the conquerors that their laws neither made nor were able to make any provision for them. Besides, once taken for granted the absolute destruction of Roman law in Longobard Italy, it would be impossible to understand how that law came to be in vigour there at a later period, when no allusion can be found in documents and chronicles to its disappearance and revival.

It seems to us that the most probable conclusion to be drawn is, that although the Roman jurisprudence was not officially recognised, it practically survived by force of custom in many private contracts of old standing in Italy.

At all events, even admitting that the persistence of Roman law can be merely inferred from Rothari's Edict,[1] it stands forth as a normal fact, in the later code of King Liutprand. For we find in this code the following clause :—"If a Longobard, having children, becomes a priest, his children will continue to live under the same law under which their father lived before he was a priest." This not only implies the existence of another law, but likewise that even the Longobard who became a priest was subject to that law. And what other law could there be excepting the Roman law? Was not canon-law, which undoubtedly existed, full of the elements of Roman law, and, therefore, did it not help to promote that rapid development of the latter which was so markedly apparent at the time? The Longobard legislation is essentially barbaric, but shows from the first how the influence of a higher civilisation is brought to bear upon it through the medium of Christianity and Roman jurisprudence. Rothari himself, while professing to compile and amend national customs, declares the absurdity of recurring to the barbarian custom of single combat for the purpose of settling legal disputes, and seeks to check that practice, just as he seeks to promote amicable compromise for the purpose of checking the barbarian blood-feud (*faida*). In certain cases he condemns the killing of witches, as being opposed to humanity and Christian principles. Then, Liutprand openly declares that he attaches little value to the so-called judgments of God. It is certain that the more deeply we dip into Longobard law, more hidden elements of Roman jurisprudence are revealed. Accordingly, the great Savigny's theory in favour of the persistence

[1] No woman living *according to the law of the Longobards* can be *selpmundia*. Therefore, some women did not live according to the law of the Longobards.

of Roman law gains renewed strength, for although he sometimes pushes it to exaggeration, it is certainly correct in the main. Moreover, the existence throughout the Middle Ages of schools of grammar and Roman law at Ravenna, Rome, and elsewhere is increasingly demonstrated.

Of course, Longobard law is a substantially Germanic product, and this fundamental character is constantly shown, although in certain details it may appear somewhat modified by the special conditions under which it was formulated. Above all, it is the legal system of an armed people, but also of an agricultural people living scattered about the country in separate dwellings, and with fields enclosed by hedges. Rothari declares that he compiles his Code for the good of his own subjects, and "particularly with regard to the incessant tribulations of the poor, for the protection of the weak, whom we know to have suffered violence, from useless exactions." As some writers have maintained, this declaration may be partly attributed to the influence of Christianity; but partly also to the fact that, generally speaking, the barbarians were chiefly hostile to the great landowners who oppressed the lower classes; so they despoiled and slaughtered the former, and often aided the latter, who had nothing worth stealing. At any rate, they were gentler to the poor than the Byzantines had been; nor is there any proof that they burdened them as they burdened the wealthy either in town or country.

Besides, the Longobard law is, above all, the barbaric law of a warlike and conquering people; and of its nature is intrinsically and essentially opposed to the genuine spirit of Roman law. For, instead of being ruled by a juridical conception of the State, its dominating idea is that of force.

The family, as the primary nucleus and basis of a

society where the authority of the Government is still very weak, is strongly constituted for self-defence, but seems to have no legal connection with the State, and to be only held together, on the contrary, by primitive ties of blood. Woman, as the weaker sex, is subjected to a perpetual tutelage, called *Mundio*, from which she is never emancipated. She can never be her own guardian (*Selbmundia*). Now, according to the Roman law, the tutelage to which woman is subjected is mainly determined by family interests ; the property has to be kept together, and therefore the patrimony must not be divided. But the Longobard woman passes from the (*Mundio*) guardianship of her father to that of her husband. On the death of the latter she is subject to the guardianship of his relatives, and in some cases of her own brothers or sons. Should all these fail, she is in the charge of the *Curtis Regia*, inasmuch as, being unfit to carry arms, she must be always under tutelage of some kind. The males take nearly the whole of the patrimony, leaving the woman, if unmarried, only a small share. The Longobard family was not, like the Roman, a species of absolute monarchy wherein the father, particularly during the Republic, exercised unlimited power ; but even among the Longobards he had very great power. The married woman found some protection in the authority still maintained over her by her own family and the father's power over the son had limits unrecognised by the Roman law. When the son became capable of bearing arms, he could separate from his own family, and become the head of another. It is a known fact that barbarian legislation in general ignored the system of dowry, but the Longobard wife was allowed to possess property that came to her from her husband. The latter was bound to free her from the tutelage of her father or brothers, and to pay the price of it ; he was likewise bound to accord her the

*Meta*, which may be called a species of dowry, and also the "morning gift" (*morgengab*). The father owed her nothing except the *faderfium*, which was a gift consisting of as much or as little as he pleased. The Germanic institution of collective property had almost died out among the Longobards, only some faint trace of it having survived here and there. We also note that in early times the Longobards made no testamentary dispositions, and when this practice was subsequently adopted by them under the influence of Roman law, a will began to be considered as binding as a donation. The opposition between this Germanic legislation of the Longobards and Roman jurisprudence is still more clearly apparent as regards penal law. Capital punishment, which was rarely applied, is, according to the Edict, to be inflicted, first of all, on any one guilty of attempting the life of the King, whose person was held sacred. "The heart of the King is in God's hand." Secondly, on the adulterous woman, whom the husband is also entitled to kill ; on the woman who murders her husband ; on the slave who murders his master ; on any man who deserts to the enemy, rebels against the monarch or the Dukes, or incites soldiers to rebellion. All the rest of the Longobard penal laws consist of a series of pecuniary compensations graduated according to the offence and the social condition of the offender. But this punishment by fine was intended to provide for the blood-feud or private vengeance recognised by the law to be a family affair ; not intended, as among the Romans, to satisfy justice and avenge the Republic. Herein lay the fundamental contrast that must have appeared to Romans as a monstrous and insupportable barbarism. The system of trial by ordeal, or *sacramentum*, was founded on the so-called judgment of God, and the *sacramentales*, or sworn witnesses, who helped to diminish trials by combat. The *guidrigild*, or

price of blood, was the fine levied for the murder of a man or woman, and was originally paid to the family of the victim, but afterwards shared between them and the King. The fact of no *guidrigild* being fixed in Rothari's Code for the murder of a Roman gave rise to the idea that the Longobards attributed no value to the life of a Roman, and that, consequently, he was their slave. But, as we have already shown, no one believes now that the Romans were enslaved, nor that their life was considered of no account, for no one dares to draw such weighty inferences from the silence of the Longobard law on those points. Accordingly, the old theory no longer merits discussion.

## CHAPTER VI

KING GRIMWALD — CONFLICT AND CONCLUSION OF PEACE BETWEEN THE POPE AND THE EMPEROR CONSTANS II. IN ITALY—DEATH OF GRIMWALD —BERCTARID (OR PERCTARIT) AND GODEPERT — CONVERSION OF THE LONGOBARDS TO CATHOLICISM—LIUTPRAND

KING ROTHARI died in 652, and was succeeded by his son, who speedily came to a violent end. Rodwald's brother-in-law, Aripert, then ascended the throne (653-61). He was the son of the Bavarian Prince Gundobald, who had escorted his sister Theodelinda to Italy, and was subsequently created Duke of Asti. Hardly anything is known of Aripert's reign, and after his death a very obscure period ensued, interwoven with so many confused legends that it is hard to trace any authentic thread of history through the tangled web.

Aripert left his kingdom to be shared between his two sons, Perctarit and Godepert, a method frequently followed by other barbarians, particularly by the Franks, but quite strange to the Longobards, whose kingdom was already too much divided into duchies. Nor was it less strange to see that the eldest brother had his capital at Milan, the second at Pavia. Thus they were not only near neighbours, but the youngest-born possessed the more important residence of the two, for Pavia had been always the

capital of the kingdom. Naturally enough the brethren were soon at war with each other. So Godebert sent Garibald, the Duke of Turin, to Grimwald, the Duke of Benevento, offering him the hand of his own sister if he would come to Pavia as his ally against Perctarit. Thereupon Grimwald, the same prince who escaped from the slaughter in Friuli, and a man of great daring, left the State of Benevento in the charge of his own son, and immediately marched northwards with a small army, which grew in number by the way. But, according to the somewhat legendary narrative, on reaching Pavia, instead of assisting Godebert, he killed him so suddenly that the King's son had barely time to fly for his life. On hearing of these events, Perctarit fled and sought refuge among the Avars in such haste that he left his wife and his son Cunibert behind, whereupon Grimwald seized both and sent them as prisoners to Benevento. Then Grimwald married Godebert's sister, whose hand was to have been his reward for succouring the man he had now dethroned and killed. The Duke of Turin, who had been an accomplice in the treacherous deed, was a kinsman of the betrayed Godebert; nevertheless, Grimwald was acclaimed King of the Longobards at Pavia in 662. This was an event of great importance, inasmuch as he still retained the Dukedom of Benevento, where his son ruled in his name. Thus, for the first, and indeed the only time, nearly the whole of Italy was united under a Longobard king, a state of things that, had it lasted, might have produced most serious results. In fact, the Pope quickly felt its effect, finding himself caught, as it were, in a ring of iron, surrounded on all sides by the Longobards. This spurred him to a hasty reconciliation with the Emperor, with whom he had been hitherto in fierce disaccord.

We have already alluded to the Monothelite con-

troversy, which had raged more hotly since the issue of the *Ecthesis*, and the Exarch's seizure of the Lateran treasure-hoard in 640. Afterwards came the publication of the *Type*, in which the Emperor Constans II. (642-68) threatened very severe penalties on all persons who should continue the dispute touching the dual will of Jesus Christ. But Pope Martin I. (649-53), having great strength of character, assembled the Lateran Council of 649, which was attended by 202 bishops, who condemned the "*most iniquitous Ecthesis*" of Heraclius, and "*the most abominable Type*" of Constans. It was the first time that a Pope dared to pronounce a sentence of this kind on imperial edicts; therefore the Exarch Olympius was directed to seize the person of Martin I., and despatch him a prisoner to Constantinople. As the legend runs, the Exarch had given orders that the Pope should be slain while celebrating Mass; but the assassin charged to do the deed was struck blind at the moment fixed for the crime.

But, just then, the rapid advance of the Mussulmans in the Caucasus, Syria, and Egypt, towards the interior of Africa, and lastly in Sicily, compelled Olympius to hasten to attack them in that island, which, owing to the smallness of their force, they quickly evacuated at his approach. At the same time fresh dissensions broke out between the Emperor Constans and the Pope, and accordingly the new Exarch Theodore *Calliopas*, who entered Rome with his army in June, 653, was instructed to seize the Pontiff's person. On reaching the Lateran, he found the Pope stretched on a couch in the Basilica, near the high altar. The people wished to drive off the soldiers by force, but Martin forbade the attempt, insisting that no blood should be shed in his cause. So he meekly surrendered, and was transported to Constantinople, where he was half-starved, tortured, and then, with

an iron collar round his neck, dragged to the terrace where malefactors were pilloried. Nevertheless, he firmly refused to recant. Finally, the Byzantines banished him to the Crimea, where he died in September, 655, and was made a Saint by the Church. The Abbot Maximus, a steadfast champion of the theory of the dual will, had his right hand chopped off and his tongue torn out.

Yet it was under the immediate successors of this cruelly-persecuted Pope Martin, *i.e.*, during the reigns of Eugenius I. (654-57) and Vitalian I. (657-72), that the Papacy succeeded in negotiating and concluding a political agreement with the Emperor without yielding a jot on the religious question.

This success was partly owed to the continual and threatening attacks of the Mussulmans, who in 655, at a place known as Alle Colonne, near Phœnix on the Lycian coast, fought a decisive naval battle with the Emperor Constans, utterly routed him and put him to flight. In addition to this event, which struck terror into all Christendom, the augmented power of the Longobards, and the religious strife lacerating Italy, served to increase the general alarm. In Aquileia the old controversy of the Three Chapters was raging anew, although the Popes had done their utmost to abate it. In Milan, the Church was plainly showing her resolve to assert the same independence that was claimed by Ravenna, which had long raised pretensions to that effect, and where the Archbishop Maurus was actually assuming a right to the title of Patriarch.

In consequence of all this, Pope and Emperor put aside their dissensions for a time and joined hands. In 662, Constans left Constantinople to lead his army to Italy, where no one could divine the real nature of his intentions. Some thought that he meant to transfer the seat of government to Sicily and make that island the

centre of the Empire, as being easier to defend against the Mussulmans ; while others held that he was coming to put a check on the Longobards' power. In that case the expedition was not badly timed. In fact, the Emperor had started from Constantinople the same year in which Grimwald was proclaimed King of the Longobards. Disembarking at Taranto in 663, and gaining reinforcements on the road, he quickly marched on Benevento at the very time when, owing to the fierce warfare raging in Northern Italy, it was difficult for Grimwald to send reinforcements to his son, Duke Romwald. Nevertheless, at the first sign of the approaching storm, the young Duke dispatched his foster-father, Seswald, to Pavia to inform the King of his danger. Thereupon, disregarding the risk of leaving his newly-conquered realm, which was seething with disaffection, Grimwald hurried to his son's help without a moment's delay. He undauntedly pushed on in spite of the numerous desertions which occurred by the way, and menacing rumours that he would never return to Pavia again. Seswald had been sent forward to advise Romwald that succour was at hand, but was captured by Constans, who brought him before the walls of Benevento, and by threats and violence tried to compel him to inform Romwald that his father could not possibly come to his aid. But the instant the young Duke appeared on the battlements, Seswald boldly cried : " Be of good cheer ! Grimwald comes ; he will reach the river Sangro this night ! " Then, foreseeing the doom that awaited him, he recommended his wife and family to his master's care. In fact, the Emperor speedily put him to death and caused his severed head to be shot from a catapult into the city, where it was received by the Duke with kisses and tears. Constans now withdrew, leaving 20,000 men to continue the siege ; but the united forces

of Romwald and the King soon defeated and drove them away.

The Emperor next proceeded to Rome (July 5, 663), was welcomed by the Pope six miles outside the gates, visited the churches and made donations to them ; but on leaving the city carried away many precious bronzes, including the gilded roof of the Pantheon. Thence, by Naples and Calabria, he made his way back to Sicily and oppressed the country so cruelly for several years that he was suffocated in his bath in 668. His son Constantine Pogonatus succeeded him on the throne (668-85).

Meanwhile, Grimwald was engaged in reducing his kingdom to order. Leaving his son to rule the Duchy of Benevento, he married one of his daughters to the Count of Capua, who had been his ally in the war against the Emperor, and appointed him Duke of Spoleto. On returning to Pavia, he turned his arms against all the chiefs who had deserted or betrayed him. Naturally, his most formidable foe was Perctarit, the ex-King of Milan, who, having found refuge with the Avars, gathered all the rebels to him. Grimwald vainly attempted to induce the Avars to give up the fugitive. Thereupon Perctarit took a daring resolve, and sent his trusted follower, Unulf, to inform the King that, feeling assured of his good faith, he would willingly come to him of his own accord. He did so, and Grimwald gave him a friendly welcome to his palace. But so many chiefs came to seek Perctarit, that suspicion grew from day to day, hence at last the King decided to slay his guest. But, warned of the design, Perctarit contrived to make his escape with the aid of his faithful Unulf. Grimwald next turned his attention to Lupus, Duke of Friuli, another of the lords who had revolted during the wars, and, accordingly, loosed the Avars upon him, who speedily defeated his troops and put him to death. After com-

pleting several other acts of vengeance, he made a friendly alliance with the Franks in 671, and died shortly after. He was a strong, valorous, daring man, and would seem to have been converted to the Catholic faith. In 668, he had added several new chapters to Rothari's Code. He was undoubtedly successful in war, but was no statesman, and had no settled policy. When the Emperor Constans withdrew from Sicily, Grimwald should have grasped the opportunity to complete the conquest of Southern Italy by seizing Naples and Rome, whereby his power in Northern Italy also would have been greatly increased. Instead of doing this, he immediately returned to the north, and wasted his time in petty revenge and skirmishing campaigns. Thus the country was again plunged in strife and disorder, and at Grimwald's death Italy was once more divided. His eldest son, Romwald, retained the Duchy of Benevento ; the second son, Garibald, ruled at Pavia under the regency of his mother, the sister of Perctarit. The latter had taken refuge in France, but now returned to Italy, was immediately acclaimed King of the Longobards, and Garibald was heard of no more. Perctarit occupied the throne for seventeen years, and being also a fervent Catholic, erected numerous churches and convents, thus greatly promoting the general conversion of the Longobards. But the important changes introduced by the new creed led to continual strife.

The most notable event of this reign was the rebellion of Alachis, Duke of Trent, a strong opponent of the clergy, whom Perctarit, on the contrary, zealously befriended. But the latter, after reducing the Duke to submission, treated him with clemency, although foreseeing that his kindness might be abused and lead to serious disasters for his line. In fact, when Perctarit died in 688 and his son Cunibert succeeded to the throne,

Alachis again rose in open revolt and successfully usurped the crown.

Before long, however, his violent tyranny, hatred of the clergy, and perfidious conduct provoked a rebellion in Cunibert's favour, so the kingdom was split in two parties and torn by the struggle between the rival claimants to the crown, until meeting in a battle near the river Adda, the strife was brought to an end by the defeat and death of the rebel Alachis.

During this period the social conditions of the Longobards underwent a remarkable transformation. The progress of Catholicism promoted civilisation and gradually welded conquerors and conquered into an united people, that now seemed to flourish with renewed life. This is shown even from the very terms used by Paulus Diaconus in his description of the struggle between Alachis and Cunibert, which gives a first hint of the importance of the Italian cities. For he relates how Alachis, when passing through Piacenza and the eastern part of the kingdom, tried both by violence and suavity to gain the friendship and alliance of the various cities, (*singulas civitates*) there (v. 39). On reaching Vicenza, Alachis was attacked by the citizens ; but after he had defeated them, they too became his partners (*socii*, v. 39). These and other terms, hitherto absent from the chronicler's pages, would incline us to believe that he had now realised the novel importance to which Italian cities had risen. At all events, we know for certain that Cunibert continued to reign down to the year 700, that he was always most friendly to the clergy, and that the seeds of culture were now seen to bud for the first time at the Court of Pavia.

But disorder returned after his death, inasmuch as the succession of his youthful son, Liutbert, who was under the guardianship of the faithful warrior Ansprand, was

disputed by Ragimbert, Duke of Turin and cousin to the King. This pretender seized the throne, which soon passed to his son, Aribert II. (701–12).

The new monarch's first campaign was directed against Ansprand, who was completely defeated and forced to fly for his life to Bavaria. Thereupon Aribert wreaked his vengeance on Ansprand's wife and family by blinding them, and depriving them of their ears and tongues. But he allowed one of the children, an infant, named Liutprand, to escape to his father unhurt, thinking him too young to be dangerous. This boy, however, was destined to become the most illustrious of the Longobard kings. In fact, at the moment when Aribert's power seemed most firmly established, and when, in spite of his cruelty, he had gained the support of the priesthood by his zeal for religion, donations to churches, and the restoration to the Pope, or, as it was expressed, to St. Peter, of certain territory in the Cottian Alps, formerly appropriated by the Longobards, the day of chastisement came. Ansprand descended into Italy with an army he had collected in Bavaria ; and after opposing a feeble resistance, Aribert's courage failed, and he determined to seek safety with the Franks. So, hurrying to Pavia, he snatched as much gold as he could carry on his person, and took flight at full speed. But in attempting to swim across the Ticino, he was dragged under and drowned by the weight of his treasure. Ansprand then ascended the Longobard throne, and dying shortly afterwards (June 13, 712), bequeathed it to his son, Liutprand.

Thus ended the lengthy period of confusion, strife, and almost anarchy endured by the Longobard kingdom during its conversion to the Catholic faith.

# CHAPTER VII

## RAVENNA AND OTHER CITIES OF THE EXARCHATE RISE IN REVOLT AGAINST THE EMPIRE—THE EMPEROR PHILIPPICUS—REBELLION IN ROME

But however great the disorder of Longobard Italy during this time, Byzantine Italy was in no better case, although there it was chiefly owing to the religious strife raging at Constantinople, and the consequent disagreements which arose between the Pope and the Emperor Justinian II. (685-95 and 705-11). In 691, the Emperor arbitrarily convoked a Council that was called the Domed Council (*Concilium in Trullo*), from the circumstance of its meetings being held in a domed hall of the Imperial Palace. By some writers, however, it is styled the Quinisextan Council, since, to avoid disputes with Rome, it was declared to be no new Council, but merely a sequel to the fifth and the sixth, since it solely touched on points of discipline, not of dogma. Nevertheless, the convocation of any Council by sole command of the Emperor constituted an act of religious independence that no Pope could possibly tolerate. The new canons prescribed, though only concerning discipline, differed from those of the Roman discipline ; accordingly, the new Council was stigmatised as "erratic" by the Catholics, and Pope Sergius (687-701) refused to subscribe to its decisions. This enraged the Emperor to so high a pitch that

he dispatched his Protospathary, Zacharias, to take the Pope prisoner. But the soldiery of Ravenna and the Pentapolis rushed to Rome to fight in his defence ; while the Roman army, which had been formed by that time, seems to have looked on without striking a blow. Consequently the rebellious militia quickly mastered the city, and the Protospathary only saved his skin by concealing himself under the Pontiff's bed. Emboldened by the turn affairs had taken, Sergius appeared on the balcony, addressed the people and exhorted them to be quiet ; but the mob refused to disperse until Zacharias had been ignominiously driven from Rome.

These incidents occurred in 693–94, and Justinian II. had no means of revenging them, since there was much disaffection in Constantinople at the time ; before long, in fact, a revolution broke out that banished him from the throne for many years (696-705). But even this change failed to put a stop to the Byzantines' quarrel with Rome. John VI. (701-705) had succeeded Sergius in the Papal Chair, when the new Exarch, Theophylactus, advanced threateningly against him ; whereupon, to use the words of the Pontifical Book, the "Militia totius Italiæ"[1] rushed tumultuously to Rome, where the Pope had some trouble to calm them. But just at this time another revolution in Constantinople restored Justinian II. to the throne, and being of cruel and bloodthirsty temper, he instantly resolved to take revenge on his enemies in Italy as well as on those in the East. A new Pope, Constantine (708–15), now reigned in Rome, and his election was soon followed by the arrival at Ravenna of a fleet commanded by the Patrician, Theodorus. Its appearance was greeted with joy, its leader welcomed with due state. But, suddenly, the principal nobles and priests were seized, fettered, and carried off to the ships ; while a

[1] "Liber Pontificalis," i. 383 of the Duchesne edition.

large force of Byzantines landed, and after sacking and burning Ravenna, dealt harsh and summary punishment on the rebels. As noted above, many of the leading citizens of Ravenna had been seized, and these were all put to death by order of the Emperor. Among others, there was a certain Joannitius, a man of much repute, as the holder of high offices of the State, and for the depth of his classical learning. Another captive, Felix, the Archbishop of Ravenna, was first blinded, according to the Byzantine custom, and then banished to the Crimea. Thus the Emperor took revenge on the rebels who had dared to humiliate his representatives in Rome. And as the Archbishop, like many of his predecessors, had always tried to assert his independence of Rome, the Pope regarded him with hostility, and allowed the Emperor to do his will on him without a word of protest. On the contrary, when summoned to Constantinople in 710, he promptly obeyed the call, and on joining Justinian in Asia Minor, apparently came to friendly terms with him; and after being pompously entertained both in the East and the West, re-entered Rome on the 14th October, 711.

Nevertheless, the general agitation in Italy had by no means calmed down, but, on the contrary, was increasing from day to day. The atrocities perpetrated at Ravenna had aroused great irritation in all the Byzantine cities, especially in those of the Exarchate. Agnellus of Ravenna, after describing the athletic games, sanguinary struggles and proud temper of his fellow-citizens, tells us how the Emperor, still thirsting for revenge, sent a new Exarch, named Joannes Rizocopus. This officer, appearing in Rome after the Pope had gone to the East, instantly seized some dignitaries of the Church and had them beheaded, whereupon another violent rebellion burst out in the Exarchate, and Rizocopus was put to death soon after his arrival at Ravenna. The people had risen in

arms, and George, the son of the murdered Joannitius, had been chosen as their chief. George divided the citizens in twelve armed companies, one of which was composed of priests and their dependents, an arrangement that was still maintained in Ravenna a hundred years later. The leader also harangued the people in language that reminds us of the orations of Cola di Rienzo. The cities of Sarsina, Cervia, Cesena, Forlimpopoli, Forlì, Faenza, Imola, and Bologna joined Ravenna in rebelling against the Empire, so that nearly the whole of the Exarchate was in open revolt.[1] This was the first instance of a confederation of Italian cities, the first time that the individuality of those cities was brought to light. It is true that the fact is only recorded in the pages of Agnellus of Ravenna, a high-flown writer of the ninth century, who gives no further particulars of that important event, and even leaves us uncertain whether it took place in 710 or 711. But Paulus Diaconus had already furnished some hints of the growing importance of the Italian cities, and even noted the precursory signs of this formidable revolt, which was to be speedily renewed in another shape.

Justinian's revenge was now checked for ever by a fresh revolution at Constantinople, in which both he and his son were put to death and Philippicus was raised to the imperial throne. This new Emperor (711-13) seemed disposed to conciliate the Pope, for he not only released the Archbishop who had been so cruelly blinded, and who, on returning to Ravenna, immediately made an act of submission to Rome, but likewise sent there the head of Justinian II., a gift welcomed by the Ravennese with fierce exultation. Nevertheless, there was soon hotter discord than ever between the Pope and the Empire, for Philippicus being a Monothelite, insisted on calling an

[1] Agnello Ravennate, *vide* "Mon. Germaniæ Historica," i. 369-70.

assembly of Monothelite bishops, who annulled the decision of the Sixth Council. This roused a storm in Rome, where the verdict of the bishops was indignantly rejected. No portrait of the heretical Emperor was allowed to be placed in St. Peter's or in any other church, no mention of his name in the Mass; the people treated his edicts with scorn, and no coin stamped with his effigy was given currency. The Pontifical Book describing this new rebellion speaks for the first time of the Duchy of the City of Rome (*Ducatus Romanæ Urbis*), mentions also the Duke (*Dux*), and the share taken in the riot by the Roman people (*populus Romanus*). The nobility, army, and people were now united against the Emperor, tried to depose the Duke nominated by his predecessor, and appointed a certain noble named Peter to replace him. Violent riots ensued, for a portion of the people were hotly opposed to the scheme. Public disorder raged for nearly a year, until at last the Pope succeeded in quieting the mob, a task that was easily achieved, as the news had just come that the heretical Philippicus had been deposed and blinded.

The new Emperor, Athanasius II., having declared his adherence to the orthodox faith, appointed Scholasticus Exarch of Ravenna; while the Romans accepted Peter as their Duke, after he had sworn to abstain from wreaking vengeance on his opponents. Serious disorder prevailed in the East for several years longer, but on the 25th March, 717, Leo III. (the Iconoclast) was elected Emperor, and his reign marked the beginning of a new era in history.

## CHAPTER VIII

LIUTPRAND—GREGORY II. AND LEO III.—CONFLICT REGARDING IMAGE-WORSHIP—LIUTPRAND PROFITS BY THE OPPORTUNITY AND ATTACKS THE DUCHY OF ROME—THE POPE MAKES THE FIRST APPEAL TO THE FRANKS—OBTAINING NO HELP FROM THEM, HE TURNS AGAIN TO THE LONGOBARDS

THREE great personages now appear on the world's stage: Liutprand, the greatest of the Longobard kings, who came to the throne in 712; Pope Gregory II., who was elected in 715, and was not unworthy of the glorious name he bore; lastly, Leo III., proclaimed Emperor in 717, whose famous Edict against image-worship in 726 roused the greatest agitation throughout the Empire.

The strong, valorous, keen-witted Liutprand, conqueror and law-giver, reigned for thirty-one years; but, on first ascending the throne, had to crush various plots against his person and punish the traitors with death. His legislative achievements were next in importance to those of King Rothari, seeing that between the years 713 and 735 he published 153 laws in fifteen assemblies, "with the approval of the nobles, judges, and entire people," or, as he puts it elsewhere, "in concert with the illustrious *Optimates* and all the Longobard nobles." The influence of the Church and of canon law is plainly visible in these statutes; indeed, Liutprand himself declares that he

wrote them by Divine inspiration, and in order to bring them nearer to the law of God, he sometimes adds *quia Papa per epistolas nos adhortavit.* The character of the first Catholic Longobard monarch is often shown very clearly in his laws, particularly in those regarding testamentary dispositions for the benefit of the soul, the recognition of marriage as a Divine institution, the privileges to be granted to the Church, and the injunction to beware of heretics. Then the influence of Roman jurisprudence is still traceable in some of his enactments as to wills and woman's rights of succession. Clearly apparent, too, is the lawgiver's aversion from the so-called "judgments of God," and his increasing desire to protect the poor from the oppression of royal officials. But all such foreign influence notwithstanding, the Code of King Liutprand is thoroughly Longobard, with its national stamp left substantially intact.

The Emperor Leo III., as we have already remarked, caused much commotion in the world's affairs. First of all, he had to struggle against the Saracens, who advanced through Africa, invaded Spain and Provence, and threatened to assault Constantinople itself. After bravely battling with them by land and by sea, Leo succeeded in repulsing them, though with much difficulty and at no small risk. Also, at the beginning of his reign, he had to put down various revolts, the gravest of which was an insurrection in Sicily, where a new emperor was actually proclaimed in his stead. This rebellion was barely quelled before the conflict with the Image-worshippers broke out, causing fierce agitation both in the East and West, and fiercest of all in Italy, where the strife was heightened by the resolute attitude of Gregory II. For this dauntless Pope was not to be scared into submission, and had quickly provided for defence against Longobard attacks by fortifying the walls of Rome. Liutprand,

however, being a fervent Catholic, showed great respect to the Pope and confirmed the restitution already made by Aripert II. of the territory that had been wrested from the Church in the Cottian Alps. Another proof of the changed religion of the Longobards was afforded by them about 719, when they rebuilt the Monastery of Monte Cassino, which they had destroyed more than a hundred years before.

The War of the Images burst into flame with extraordinary speed, materials for the conflagration being already prepared. Unfortunately, the chronological sequence of events is involved in the deepest obscurity. Ecclesiastical writers have profited by this circumstance to justify the Pope's conduct in every respect, by even endeavouring to give a religious colour to certain measures taken by him, which were anterior to the struggle, and solely dictated by political motives. Thus the history of this period is very confused as regards its details. But it appears to be well-ascertained that, shortly before the strife began, Liutprand, taking advantage of the disordered state of the Empire, advanced upon Ravenna and took possession of Classis. Yet, as neither the causes nor consequences of this highly important capture have been put upon record, it remains an unexplained and isolated fact. About 717 or 718, Romwald II., Duke of Benevento, had seized the fortified city of Cumae, which dominated the last-remaining free line of communication between Naples and Rome. Feeling the imminence of the danger, the Pope sent gold and good advice to John I., Duke of Naples, who thereupon recaptured Cumae by sudden assault, after slaying 300 Longobards and securing 500 prisoners. We also find that before the struggle for the "Images" had begun, the Emperor had ordered the Exarch to impose fresh taxes in Italy without granting exemption to

ecclesiastical property, and, if necessary, by going to the length of confiscating Church treasure. These instructions may have been partly dictated by hostility to the Pope, but undoubtedly to a greater extent by the pressing need of supplies for pursuing the war against the Saracens. It is no less certain, however, that the Pope regarded the new tax as an intolerable insult, and instructed his dependents to refuse payment, thus giving an example that was widely followed and served to provoke revolt.

This affair moved the Exarch to such exceeding wrath that he started a fierce quarrel with the Pope, and presently a conspiracy against the latter's life was hatched in Rome, although whether at the instance of the Exarch himself or of men who hoped to win his favour by that means, is not positively established. It was rumoured that Marinus, the Duke of Rome, was the accomplice in the plot, and that Roman nobles, and even dignitaries of the Church, had no small share in it. Legend adds that the Duke was all at once miraculously stricken with paralysis, and being therefore obliged to leave Rome, the murderous scheme came to nought. Soon, however, the arrival in Italy of the new Exarch, Paulus, encouraged the conspirators to hope for success, but then the Roman people turned against them and fell on them with fury. The Cartulary Jordanes and the Sub-Deacon Joannes were killed outright, and a Duke named Basilius was forced to become a monk. Thereupon the Exarch Paul, being moved to increased wrath, dispatched an army to Rome to depose the Pope and take him prisoner. But the Romans flew to arms, and being also assisted by the Longobards from Spoleto and Benevento, held the bridge on the River Anio and repulsed the Exarch's soldiery. According to certain writers these events preceded the War of the Images, but others, on the contrary, maintain that they were merely episodes of

that war. It is highly probable that they were rather political harbingers of the coming religious struggle, and by thus preparing the ground for it, increased its fury.

There is no doubt that the Emperor must have been deeply enraged by the Pope's opposition in Italy, at a moment when such serious danger in the East was menacing, not only his throne, but the whole Christian world. For the same reason, ecclesiastical writers have a tendency to assign all these incidents to a later date, and by presenting them as episodes of the religious struggle, make them serve as a complete justification of the course pursued by the Pope.

However this may be, Leo III.'s famous edict against the worship of images was only issued in 726. The iconoclastic doctrine was closely connected with the Monothelite and Monophysite disputes ; it was likewise another result of the Eastern spirit that was invariably opposed to the West, and it was supported for political reasons. The rapid advance of the Saracens was prepared and promoted by the wide spread of Islamism, which, as we have previously noted, found favour with certain Eastern races and among those of North Africa, because it came to them in the shape of a simply monotheistic creed, untroubled by discussions on the Trinity or the dual nature of Jesus, and without any worship of the Saints. Whether purposely or not, the Emperor's edict afforded some satisfaction to the native tendencies of the Oriental mind, yet without straying a step from the Christian fold.

The image worship that was so congenial to the temper of all Southern races in the West, had its origin in paganism. The exaggeration to which it was carried in venerating, not only visible representations of God, of Jesus, of the Virgin, and the Saints, but even the sign of the Cross and relics of every kind, had been long con-

demned by the most influential Fathers of the Church. Nevertheless, this worship became an integral part of the Catholic religion, a cherished need for the natives of Italy. Hence the contention regarding it raged with the same violence that was afterwards displayed at the time of the Reformation. The Emperor decreed that all images should be removed from the churches and destroyed, and threatened the Pope with deposition unless he obeyed the edict. But the Pope unhesitatingly treated it as a declaration of war, by pronouncing the Imperial decree to be null and void. Next, the destruction of certain famous images reputed to work miracles raised the popular fury to the highest pitch. In Rome, Ravenna, the Pentapolis, and Istria, the people flew to arms and appointed dukes of their own choice. Even Venice soon revolted in favour of the Pope. At Ravenna there was a momentary risk of civil war, as the imperial party there was apparently supported by the Archbishop Joannes, who sought to profit by the turmoil for the purpose of establishing his own independence from Rome. But the Pope's adherents soon won the day even in Ravenna ; the Archbishop was banished and the Exarch Paul was excommunicated and killed. In Rome, the Duke Peter, being suspected of connivance with Constantinople, was deprived of his sight. There is also mention of a certain Duke Exilaratus[1] in the Neapolitan region, who, having risen against the Pope, was slain in the Campagna by the Romans, together with his son. All this occurred about the year 726 or 727, and is another proof of the increasing autonomy of the Byzantine cities in Italy. In Rome, besides the Dukedom and the Duke, the Roman army (*Exercitus Romanus*) was gaining greater importance,

[1] He could not have been Duke of Naples, although that title was attributed to him, seeing that, as Schipa has noted, that Dukedom was then held by Theodorus, elected in 719.

and the nobles, who commanded it, were becoming the veritable rulers of the city.

Naturally enough, Liutprand tried to turn the general confusion to account, in order to seize a larger slice of Italy; and, in fact, many cities of Æmilia and the Pentapolis surrendered to him without any resistance. He also took Sutri, which was only thirty miles from Rome; but soon restored it to its owner, the Church, with whom he still wished to avoid open conflict. The Pope had realised by this time that he would be the chief sufferer from any increase of the Longobards' power. In fact, if they once became masters of all Italy, he would be merely the bishop and servant of their king, who, being so near a neighbour, would be therefore more inconvenient and oppressive than a distant emperor. In addition to all this, the Romans, with their growing thirst for independence, were bitterly opposed to the Longobards, who threatened to annihilate it. In truth, the Roman desire for independence was at the same time both an advantage and a danger to the Pope, as he could not remain without means of defence in the midst of an armed and often rebellious people. Therefore, everything considered, he must have wished to see the power of the Empire and the Longobards pretty equally balanced, since if either of them gained the mastery, that one could easily keep the Romans in check.

Accordingly, he presently set to work to put down the very insurrection he had provoked. So when the rebels proposed the election of a new emperor, he exerted his authority to crush the scheme, and exhorted the people to respect their legitimate sovereign, who, as he said, would probably return in the end to the true faith, without Italy being forced to break loose from the Empire whose aid was always indispensable to the welfare of the world.

This was an equivocal and involved attitude, and the

falseness of it became still more apparent in 727, when the new Exarch landed in Italy. Although at strife with the Emperor, the Pope had certainly done him a good turn by trying his best to pacify the rebels, but at the same time he was on good terms with Liutprand on account of the restitution of Sutri to the Church, and the Byzantines could not approve of any friendly relations with the barbarian king who was usurping possession of their own territory. Accordingly, the Exarch lost no opportunity of opposing the Pope, and even sent an envoy to organise a plot against him in Rome, but the scheme being discovered the people fell upon the man and sought to put him to death. On this occasion also the Pope was obliged to intervene to save the envoy's life. Thereupon the Exarch changed his plans, and entering into negotiations with Liutprand helped him to effect the subjection of the Dukes of Spoleto and Benevento (Thrasamund II. and Farwald), who thereupon swore allegiance and gave hostages to the King. Shortly after this, the united forces of the Exarch and the Longobards were threatening the walls of Rome. But Gregory II. was equal to the emergency, and relying on the might of his religious prestige, he marched in solemn procession from the gates to meet the King, and led him through the city to St. Peter's, where the Longobard, in token of submission, deposited his crown, sword, and mantle, at the foot of the altar. The ceremony ended, the Pope also concluded an amicable agreement with the Exarch. Both reconciliations, however, were purely ephemeral.

Gregory II. died on the 11th February, 731, and was succeeded by Gregory III. (731-41), who seemed disposed at first to favour the Emperor at the expense of the Longobards; but after convoking a Council (731), which condemned all iconoclasts to exclusion from the Church, a fresh rupture with Constantinople naturally ensued, and

the strife went on with increased fury. The Emperor now levied heavier taxes in Italy, and especially in Calabria and Sicily, where the Church possessed vast estates.[1] It was at this moment apparently that all the churches in those provinces were annexed to the Patriarchate of Constantinople and removed from the jurisdiction of Rome, an event that caused Southern Italy to become Hellenic for a long period.[2] But the severance of the churches was the last injury inflicted on Rome by Constantinople, for henceforth the Empire was increasingly engrossed in the struggle with the Saracens, and torn by internecine strife. Meanwhile the Pope was left to face the threatening Longobards, without a single ally.

This was a period of rapid transformation, of continual change, and therefore a desperately critical time, not only for the Papacy but for Italy at large. On the one hand, the menacing attitude of the Longobards was driving the Pope to unite with the Emperor ; but, on the other, that sovereign was too far off and too deeply engrossed in nearer concerns to be able to afford any help ; and even were he able to give it, the question of the images had destroyed all hope of coming to an agreement with him. This was the reason why the Popes, with unfailing political acumen and truly prophetic foresight, now began to turn their attention to the Franks. For that Northern

[1] The name of Calabria, originally applied to both Apulias and to the Territory of Otranto, was extended in the seventh century to the Province of Bruttii, which also appertained to the Duchy of Calabria, and derived its name from its, then, principal region. But when the Longobards had gradually conquered the whole of the territory known as Calabria, the Duchy was reduced to the single Province of Bruttii, which retained the name of Calabria in 727 and has kept it ever since. It was an old custom of the Byzantines to preserve the nomenclature and semblance of things of which the reality and substance had vanished. *Vide* Schipa, "Archivio Storico per le Provincie Napolitane," Anno xx., fasc. i., Naples, 1895.

[2] *Vide* Hodgkin, vi. 465 ; Bury ii. 446. It is strange that the Pope should not have raised a strong protest against this usurpation.

people had been converts to Catholicism for some time, their power was increasing, and they had become zealous champions of the Church and the orthodox creed. They were now fighting valiantly against the Saracens, who had poured into France from Africa and Spain ; and, as we shall presently find, hurled them back over the Pyrenees. In appealing to the Franks, the Popes showed themselves inspired with a new conception of the world's policy, a policy that would secure their safety from the Longobards without leaving them at the mercy of the Byzantines, who always deserted them at critical moments in order to tyrannise over them when the danger had passed. Meanwhile all was disorder and confusion, everything was changing. Hence it was impossible to carry out any fixed and preconceived plan ; all depended on chance, so it was best to await one's chance, and seize it when it came.

Ravenna was now held by the Longobards, but how and when they became its masters is not accurately known. There are certain letters of Gregory III. (attributed by some writers to his predecessor), written about the year 734, in which he directs Orso, the Doge of Venice, and Antoninus, the Patriarch of Grado, to assemble their Venetian troops, and set forth with the Exarch Eutychius (727-50), who had sought refuge with them, to recapture the capital of the Exarchate from the Longobards and restore it to the Empire. The Doge undertook the campaign, and led his forces to Ravenna by sea, while the Exarch marched them overland. The city was won, King Liutprand's nephew, Hildeprand, was captured ; and the Duke Peredeus, of Vicenza, was killed. This expedition, although the particulars of it are involved in obscurity, serves to show us that Venice was already constituted as an almost independent State, and it also exemplifies the changeable and haphazard policy then pursued by Emperor,

Pope, and Longobards. Each of these three Powers wished to obtain predominance in Italy to the detriment of the rest; therefore each joined in turn with one of the others, but never for long, so that neither rival might have a chance of becoming inconveniently strong. When the Longobards seemed in the ascendant, the Pope drew closer to the Empire; but as fresh discord soon rose between them, he then turned again to Liutprand, who, as we have seen, quickly profited by the Papal favour to extend his power in Italy and reduce Spoleto and Benevento to subjection. Thereupon the Pontiff, finding himself caught as it were in an iron trap, and with his Romans on the point of revolt, again changed his course and assisted the Dukes in their combat with the King. Accordingly, the dealings of Rome with Spoleto and Benevento acquire real importance, inasmuch as they now constitute and decide the dominant characteristic of Italy's policy. Thrasimund of Spoleto, who, together with the Duke of Benevento, had shortly before made submission to Liutprand and left hostages in his hands, again rose to arms. Whereupon Liutprand pressed him hotly and forced him to fly to Rome. The King wished the Pope and the Romans to give up the fugitive; and as they refused to do this, he instantly marched over the border and seized four castles in the Duchy of Rome.

It was on this occasion that the Pope wrote the first letter that has come down to us of the series of missives he addressed to Charles Martel, the man who really consolidated the Carolingian dynasty of the Franks. In this letter the Pontiff asked his aid against the Longobards, who had dared to pillage even the Church of St. Peter, which at that period was outside the walls of Rome. The request came at a particularly unfortunate moment, for Charles Martel was then engaged in warring against the Saracens, and having applied to Liutprand for help, the Longobard

was marching to join him. But although Charles was unable, just then, to aid in defending the Church against Liutprand, he helped indirectly to keep him away from Rome. So the Pope instantly profited by the opportunity to assist Thrasimund to recover his State. Thus the Duke was able to return to Spoleto, and promised, although without keeping his word, to reconquer and restore to the Duchy of Rome the lands which had been unlawfully seized by the Longobard king. Meanwhile the latter, learning when he reached Northern Italy that the Frankish war with the Saracens was at an end, led his army back towards Ravenna, sacking all lands belonging to the Church. Then traversing the Pentapolis, he re-entered the Spoleto territory, and despite the vigorous resistance offered by the people, invaded the Roman Duchy (740), and pounced upon all the lands, flocks, and chattels belonging to the Church.

Then Gregory III. indited another letter to Charles Martel, requesting him to send envoys to Rome, to examine for themselves the real state of affairs, and imploring him not to forsake the Church on account of his friendship for those "most execrable Longobards." The Dukes of Spoleto and Benevento, he added, desired his aid against Liutprand, who persecuted them solely because they were friends of the Pope. He concluded with an allusion to the preceding letter he had sent to Charles by the State embassy that had presented him with the golden keys of St. Peter's tomb. These were very precious relics, for they contained filings from the Holy Apostle's chains. But Charles Martel was still unable to afford any real help to the Church, and the Pope's discomfiture was increased by the failure of Duke Thrasimund to fulfil his promises. Therefore, from sheer despair, Gregory seemed at last on the point of opening negotiations with Liutprand, but expired on

the 10th of December, 741. Charles Martel had died two months earlier (October 22nd), leaving his two sons, Carloman and Pipin, to share France between them. In the preceding year (June 18, 740), the Emperor, Leo III., had passed away. So, within a short space of time, most of the chief actors in the world's drama vanished from the stage. Liutprand still survived, but not for long.

After only four days *sede vacante*, Pope Zacharias was elected (741-52). Being a Greek and consequently a friend of the Empire, he had little to fear from Constantinople or the Franks, but much to dread from the Longobards. The speed with which he was consecrated is worthy of note, inasmuch as the brevity of the interval forces us to believe that the Imperial sanction must have come from the Exarch by means of the Duke of Rome, or directly from the latter. The present Duke, Stephen by name, was elected in 739, and, contrary to established custom, had also the title of Patrician. Hence, it may be inferred that, like some other Italian dukedoms, the Duchy of Rome was also slipping away from the Exarchate and becoming almost independent of it, while still acknowledging the supremacy of the Emperor. Certainly, Rome was daily assuming more and more the aspect of an autonomous city, and the outlying territory constituting the Duchy and comprising nearly the whole of the so-called Patrimony of St. Peter, shared its independence. As we already know, Rome had an army of her own, commanded by the Duke, and was governed by the nobles under the Duke. Nevertheless, the Pope exercised great power, and this division of government constituted, throughout the Middle Ages, the special character of the future municipality of Rome. Then, as Venice and Naples were also escaping in one way or another from the rule

of the Exarchs, the old power of these Imperial governors of Italy was fast melting away. The new Pope, Zacharias, was also obliged to come to terms with Liutprand, in order to avoid facing him as a foe, and for the sake of regaining his lost territories, which were, in fact, restored to the Church. Thereupon Thrasimund, being left to stand alone, was compelled to become a monk and renounce his Duchy of Spoleto, which Liutprand then bestowed on a nephew of his own. Some years before (732) the Longobard king had appointed Gisulf II., son of Romwald II., as ruler of the Duchy of Benevento. He next arranged in person a treaty of peace with the Duke of Rome, which is another proof of the rising political importance of the latter's position. Either directly or indirectly Liutprand was now the master of the greater part of Italy, with no fear of any attack from France or the Empire, both realms being torn by internal strife. At this moment he might have succeeded in bringing all Italy under his rule, by expelling the Byzantines, assuming complete possession of the Duchies of Spoleto and Benevento, keeping the Pope in check, and everywhere suppressing the rising tendency to establish local self-government. But with all his talent and daring Liutprand was no statesman, and therefore incapable of steadily directing his policy towards a lofty ideal. Besides, he was already advanced in years and in failing health. He seems to have been on the point of seizing Ravenna, but was dissuaded from the idea by the Pope. He died in January, 744, and left his throne to his nephew, Hildeprand, who proved very unpopular and was soon driven from power.

# CHAPTER IX

## VENICE AND NAPLES

The Exarchate, as we have seen, was rapidly falling to pieces, existed only in name, and was now little more than an ordinary dukedom. Rome was already constituted as a species of Republic, with an army of its own, that, on more than one occasion, had readily gone to war with the Exarchate, of which even Byzantine South Italy was now beginning to assert its independence. The late disturbances at Ravenna and in the Pentapolis had naturally quickened the desire for emancipation from the Empire. Thanks to her geographical position, Venice was first and foremost in this race. We have already noted how, even in Theodoric's day, Cassiodorus wrote to the Venetian Tribunes by his sovereign's command ; and we learn from this letter that the islands of the Lagoon were inhabited by an adventurous seafaring folk who lived in a state of semi-independence, each island having its own Tribune, but all probably united in a confederation. Undoubtedly at that time Venice was in some degree a dependency of the Goths ; and thus when Italy was conquered by Belisarius and Narses, she too was naturally subjected to the Byzantine rule, and would have remained under it for a long period but for the coming of the Longobards. These invaders recognised the importance of holding Venice, and therefore sought to conciliate her by granting her a certain amount of in-

dependence, in order to prevent the sea-girt city from falling into the enemy's hands. In 580, the Patriarch of Aquileia, weary of the harsh oppression exercised by the Longobards, took refuge at Grado, and thus the Venetians acquired a spiritual lord of their own. The Longobards being greatly angered by this change, Liutprand then requested the Pope to transfer the Bishop of Cividale to Aquileia and raise his position to that of a Patriarch. His prayer was granted; but when he insisted that the Patriarch of Grado should be made subordinate to the new tenant of Aquileia, the Venetians protested and the Pope yielded the point; so that the Longobards realised that they had only won a nominal victory without any substantial advantage. Thus Venice had rescued both her secular and ecclesiastical government from their hands and was ruled by Constantinople instead, under Tribunes elected by the people and sanctioned by the Emperor. There were probably twelve Venetian Tribunes, to correspond with the number of the islands, and officials with the same title were also established in some Byzantine cities of Central and Southern Italy, as, for instance, in Naples, Gaeta, Rimini, and even in the Pentapolis. The Pragmatic Sanction had already ruled that all *Judices* of the provinces should be chosen by the bishops and most influential personages among the inhabitants of the territory to be governed. The popular choice had then to be ratified in the Emperor's name.

In course of time, the continual insurrections of the Slaves on one side and of the Longobards on the other, caused the Venetians to feel the need of greater unity of rule, in order to strengthen their means of defence; hence they decided on the creation of a Doge. According to the regulations then in force, the Exarch should have summoned the bishops and notables to make choice of a candidate. But the chronicler Dandolo informs us, on

the contrary, that in 697 the people, the Patriarch of Grado, the bishops, notables, and Tribunes all met together and elected the "worthy and honourable," that is to say, the noble Paoluccio, to the new dignity. This Doge does not appear to have been the head of the military power, which, according to the Pragmatic Sanction, was then considered to be distinct from the civil power, and was vested in the *Magister Militum*. The Doge convoked popular assemblies, nominated tribunes and judges to administer justice to the people and the clergy; but excluding, of course, all ecclesiastical questions which were tried by a special tribunal, with right of appeal to the Doge. In accordance with Byzantine custom, the Doge was also empowered to convoke Synods and charge them to elect bishops, who were to receive investiture at his hands. Apparently, the election of the first Doge was duly confirmed by the Emperor, and the people selected nobles to fill all the other offices of the State. Paoluccio died in 717 and was succeeded by Marcello, who had been Master of the Soldiery, ruled as Doge for nine years, and was followed by Orso. It was during the latter's reign that Liutprand took advantage of the strife for the Images to seize Ravenna, whence the Exarch Eutychius made his escape to Venice. Then were received more letters from the Pope ordering the Doge Orso and the Patriarch Antoninus to recapture Ravenna, for the purpose of reinstating the Exarch. The successful accomplishment of this task proves that the city of the Lagoon already possessed a strong and united local government. In 737 the Doge Orso was killed in a civil war that had broken out between the national party, of which he was the head, and the faction that favoured greater subjection to Constantinople and that gained the upper hand for a time. Then, for a period of five years (737-41), instead of appointing a Doge for life, a Master of the Soldiery was elected for a

term of twelve months only, as in the case of the Tribunes. Towards the close of 741, however, a fresh resolution brought about the deposition and blinding of John, the Master of the Soldiery, and restored the office of Doge (742) in the person of Diodato, the son of Orso. The Doge being opposed to the Imperial faction, leant upon the Longobards, and was overthrown when the latter were defeated by the Franks. The great struggle between the Franks and the Longobards, provoked by the Popes for the purpose of securing their own independence and preparing the way towards temporal power, unavoidably led, as will be seen, to the downfall of the Franks, favoured the rise of the Longobard power, and promoted, later on, the municipal autonomy of Italian cities.

The history of the Duchy of Naples is very different from that of Venice. In Naples, the population was, probably, divided into Scholæ as in other Byzantine-Italian cities, and likewise governed by *Optimates*. In Naples, the ancient municipal *Curia* (or Corporation) had ceased to exist, and the city itself belonged to Campania, which was ruled by the Judge or Governor of the province who was subordinate to the Prefect of Italy appointed by the Emperor. The Pragmatic Sanction greatly augmented the civil power of the bishops, who practically decided the election of a judge, from among the natives of the territory. After the year 638, we find the bishop acting as governor, instead of the judge, and with him a military chief, who was a Duke or Master of the Soldiery. At first these were two separate offices, but their functions were afterwards combined in a single official who ruled the so-called Duchy of Naples. The Duke was appointed by the Emperor to the command of the army, or, more strictly speaking, of the armed inhabitants of the city, and the counts and tribunes commanding the various garrisons of the province now under his orders. Thanks to this

organisation, Naples was enabled to offer a very creditable resistance to the Longobards—particularly to those of Spoleto and Benevento—and thus preserved its independence, which soon grew apace.

During the reign of Gregory I. we note that Naples had neither a Duke nor a Master of the Soldiery, and that the Pope complained of this to the Emperor and implored him to provide the city with the required leaders. But no attention being paid to his request, he sent a Tribune to encourage the Neapolitans to defend their city ; consequently he gained great authority throughout the Duchy, and watched over it for some time. In fact, the Pope was long occupied in checking the corrupt practices of the Neapolitan bishops, and protecting the citizens and Decurions from the immoderate extortions of the Imperial tax-collectors. When the Emperor Constans visited Italy, about 661, he altered the form of the Dukedom so as to render it a stronger centre of defence against the Longobards. In fact, from that time forward, we find Naples withstanding both Longobard and Saracenic attacks with far greater energy than before, and later on valiantly resisting the Norman invaders, to whom it was finally obliged to succumb. The new Duke of Naples, also styled the Consul, or Master of the Soldiery, was very different from his predecessors, having little in common with them save his title. But we have no detailed knowledge of his real attributes. Elected by the people to whom he belonged, he had command of the army, and combined not only the functions of the old Duke and old Master of the Soldiery, but also those of the judge, thus wielding, like the Exarch, both civil and military power. Neither is it possible to ascertain the precise extent of this Duchy of Naples, although it must have comprised, originally at least, almost the whole of ancient Campania, including even Amalfi and Gaeta,

which were subsequently detached from it. But it is certain that the Duchy of Naples formed an integral portion of the Empire and was under Imperial administration. Greek was the official language, and all Neapolitan coins were stamped with the Emperor's image with his name inscribed in Greek characters, while the reverse bore the name of the city, likewise in Greek. After Constans' decease, the Emperor began to neglect the mainland of Italy and the Southern Provinces in particular, simply because the officers charged with the government of Sicily were continually engaged in defending the island from harassing Saracen attacks. Accordingly, the Duchy of Naples, being left unaided, had to rely on its own resources, and having to live sword in hand, as it were, was known as the *Militia*, or the *Militia of the Romans*, or even the *Militia of the Neapolitans*. By slow degrees, the Duchy became more detached from the Empire, until it finally obtained the position of an autonomous State. By the year 764, it had had thirteen Dukes, whose terms of office were of such varying duration as to induce the belief that they were appointed for life.

Many strange vicissitudes befell the Duchy. First of all, in the days of Gregory I., we find it subject to the Pope's domination; later on, we see it incorporated with the Empire, to which it remained faithful even during the struggle for the Images, without taking any part in the rebellion of Ravenna and the Pentapolis; then it gradually withdrew from the Empire, and was finally separated from it by Duke Stephen II. (elected in 755), who rendered it independent and again brought it closer to Rome. At that date the official language was Latin, instead of Greek; and on all coins in daily use the Emperor's head was replaced by that of St. Januarius, as a symbol of independence. The Saint's name was inscribed in Latin, while on the

obverse the Greek appellation of the city was replaced by that of the Duke, and also in Latin. The Emperor's name, however, was still inscribed on coins of higher value and on official documents. But the Dukes were now independent, declaring war, making peace, and concluding treaties in their own right. During this period Stephen II. became so closely connected with the Church, that on being left a widower with several children he was appointed to the See of Naples, at the death of the former bishop in 766, received the tonsure in Rome and continued to rule Naples jointly with his son Gregory II., who succeeded to him and reigned as Duke for twenty-seven years and a half. Thus the Dukedom began to be considered hereditary, at least in some degree.

# BOOK IV

## *THE FRANKS AND THE FALL OF THE LONGOBARD KINGDOM*

## CHAPTER I

### THE MEROVINGIANS AND THE ORIGIN OF THE CAROLINGIAN DYNASTY

The Franks had been spreading over Gaul and gaining higher importance for some time past. Before long they were fated to become the preponderating power in Europe, and they were even to conquer Italy and inaugurate the commencement of an entirely new epoch. Hence it is necessary to give a rough sketch of their history. The Franks were composed of many different Germanic tribes settled on the right bank of the Rhine. At first they drifted into the Empire by driblets: some of them were to be found in the army, others among the tillers of the soil, others again among the slaves. When Stilicho recalled to Italy the legions guarding the Rhine in order to swell his ranks against Alaric, the Franks, like other Germanic tribes, swept over the river in hordes (406). But, unlike the Goths, Vandals, and Longobards, they did not rush on from one region to another, far removed from their own land. On the contrary, they advanced slowly, and gradually conquered

Gaul without altogether deserting Germany, which continued to send them supplies of food and reinforcements of armed men. Accordingly, even when settled in the Empire, they retained their own customs and institutions, as, for instance, that of collective property, longer than other barbarian invaders. Meanwhile the Romans, with whom they were brought in contact, likewise preserved their own laws and institutions. Thus, the Municipal Curia lasted longer in Gaul than in other lands. Also, if the two races blended together more slowly than elsewhere, their fusion was less sudden and more organic. It does not appear that the Franks seized, like other barbarians, a third, or more than a third, of the lands of the conquered race. Great Roman proprietors are to be seen living side by side with great Frankish landowners, Romans are allowed to fill public offices, and are not even forbidden to enter the army. The only marked difference between them was that from the beginning the *guidrigild*, or blood fine, for killing a Frank was double the amount exacted for killing a Roman. The Franks being a confederation of various tribes, it naturally followed that, owing to diversity of manners and customs, the Salian and Ripuarian Franks soon split asunder, and were both sub-divided into various petty kingdoms, which, being continually in fierce conflict with one another, thus retarded the progress of the nation at large. Whenever some prince, gifted with political and military talent, arose among them, all the tribes united in one kingdom, but split asunder again at the sovereign's death. Their history ran in this course for several centuries, until Charlemagne succeeded for a while in subjecting nearly the whole of Europe to his rule.

The first man who bound all the Franks together was Clovis, the founder of the Merovingian dynasty.

He had become the chief of a Salian tribe on his father's decease in 481 ; by force of talent and valour he succeeded in uniting the Salians and Ripuarians, and was the recognised founder of the monarchy. But he was also notoriously unscrupulous, and in order to satisfy his ambition was guilty of most abominable cruelty towards kinsmen and allies, ridding himself of them by bloodshed and treason, causing some to be assassinated by his hirelings and slaying others with his own hand. The number of atrocious crimes attributed to him and his successors is so enormous, that one inclines to think it must have been greatly swelled in legendary accounts ; nevertheless, with all possible deductions, enough remains to make us shudder. All these crimes, joined with much vicious excess, finally reduced the dynasty to such weakness as to cause its overthrow. The incidents of Clovis's career, which mainly promoted the formation of the monarchy, were his wars with the Alamanni and his conversion to Catholicism, instead of to the Arian creed adopted by the other barbarian tribes. The Alamannic war was an important event in history, in that it marked the beginning of the reaction of the West against the East, which was continued after Clovis's time and put an end to the wholesale migrations of the Germanic tribes. The king's conversion to Catholicism, in fulfilment of a vow made during the war, should Heaven grant him victory, led to the conversion of his people. Thus the monarchy soon gained favour with the Church of Rome, which, by means of its bishops, was more firmly organised than the Arian Church. So the Franks became God's chosen people for the defence of religion and of the Pope, a fact that also facilitated their fusion with the Romans. And it is really very curious to note how even at that time mankind had a clear prevision of the

future greatness of this northern race. Gregory of Tours, who wrote shortly after this time, frequently repeats, while relating the continual atrocities of the Frankish king, that: "Every day the Almighty brought some enemy of Clovis to ruin, thus enlarging the dominions of this king, inasmuch as he walked righteously in the ways of the Lord, and did that which was good in His sight." Elsewhere he positively styles him a new Constantine. So, too, other writers of about the same period speak of him in a manner which clearly shows that this new Constantine gives them a forecast of the Charlemagne of after times. Another remarkable point is the truly marvellous persistence with which the Popes clung to their purpose throughout many centuries, almost forcing the Franks to accept the mission pre-assigned to them by the will of the Church; and never ceased their efforts until that aim was achieved by the coronation of Charlemagne and the foundation of the temporal power. Meanwhile, the Emperor Athanasius conferred upon Clovis the insignia of the Patrician and Consular orders, with which he was solemnly invested in the Church of St. Martin at Tours, where he was hailed by the prelates as the new Constantine, the man of God. Paris was then chosen as the capital of his kingdom.

When Clovis died in 511, his dominions were divided between his four sons, and then began that period of luxury, corruption, civil war, bloodshed, treachery, and murder which caused Gaul to be compared to the kingdom of the Atridæ. In 558 Chlotochar I., the last surviving son of Clovis, reunited all the Franks under the sceptre, but, after his decease, the monarchy was again shared between his four sons, and remained thus divided for a long course of years. There has been much discussion as to the real nature of these partitions,

which involved the country in a continued series of civil wars. Certain French historians maintain that the royalty was divided rather than the realm itself (*la royauté plutôt que le royaume*). But, in point of fact, the Franks were not yet fused into one people, had no conception of nationality or of the State, and therefore France was still unborn. To the barbarian mind, this kingdom, solely united by violence and conquest, seemed the property of the conqueror, hence, by the law of inheritance, it was divided among his sons. Even public service was mainly rendered to the person of the king. The idea of any central and organic administration was altogether non-existent ; there was little distinction between public and private rights. But although this barbarian society was still so scattered, thanks to continual contact with the Romans, to the influence of the Church and to the geographical unity of the land, the Franks were slowly, but steadily, tending to form a single and united people. The four separate kingdoms (Neustria, Austrasia, Aquitaine and Burgundy) which arose, disappeared, and rose again after the death of Clovis I., were substantially reduced to only two (Austrasia and Neustria) during the seventh century. Neustria, which consisted of West and South Gaul, was occupied by the Salian Franks, in whom the Roman element predominated ; whereas among the Ripuarian Franks of Austrasia, Germanic influences chiefly prevailed, owing to continued intercourse with their old country across the Rhine.

At first Salian Neustria was the leading power, for Clovis, the founder of the monarchy and of the Merovingian line, belonged to the Salian race. Likewise the first four kings, who at different times united the four realms in one, and of whom Clovis II. (638–56) was the last, were all of Neustrian birth. The seat of these Frankish governments was usually the king's palace, and the

master or mayor of the palace was the prime minister. Originally, the latter's functions were limited to the management of the royal household and lands, but in course of time his power grew until he successively rose to be Finance Minister, Prime Minister, and finally head of the State. When the four kingdoms had been reduced to two (Neustria and Austrasia), the centre of gravity was transferred by slow degrees from the first to the second. As the Ripuarians prevailed over the Salians, so Germanic influences naturally prevailed over Roman. Then, meetings or assemblies of the people grew more and more frequent, and the Germanic nobles, who afterwards formed the feudal aristocracy, gained increased power. In Austrasia, these nobles adhered more and more closely to the mayor of the palace, who was sometimes elected by them and recognised as their chief. Thus, by slow degrees, the mayor acquired more power than the monarch, for the Merovingian line so rapidly deteriorated, became so weak and contemptible, that its last representatives were known as the *rois fainéants*, and finally driven to yield the throne to their rivals. Thereupon they were succeeded by the stronger, more intelligent, and also more virtuous dynasty of the Carolingians.

After the decease of Clovis II. (656), the mayors of the palace rose to such power in Austrasia, that they seemed on the point of converting that realm into a separate, autonomous Duchy. But the strength of the ties between Salians and Ripuarians, together with the country's geographical unity, unavoidably led to the formation of a single realm, in which the Ripuarians would predominate. So this new kingdom was founded by Pippin, surnamed Heristal, from the name of his own castle. He was mayor of the palace in Austrasia, where he likewise assumed the title of Duke, and finally became the virtual master of the kingdom. On his death (16th

December, 714), the country was plunged in disorder by the strife between his heirs, but finally his natural son, Charles Martel, won the victory, and although he never attained to a higher dignity than that of a Duke in Austrasia, and of mayor of the palace in Neustria, he practically succeeded to his father as hereditary prince of the whole realm. A man of high political aptitude and distinguished prowess in the field, he was able to establish his dynasty on a permanent footing.

By a series of successful campaigns against Saxons, Frisians, Bavarians, and Alamanni (718–30), Charles put an end to the invasions of Germanic tribes, and once assured of safety on that side, turned his arms against the Moors, who, pushing through Spain in junction with the African Mussulmans, had already swept across the Pyrenees. In 732, he fought a pitched battle with the invaders near Poictiers and defeated them signally with great slaughter. According to the legendary account of Paulus Diaconus, the dead numbered no less than 375,000. In any case it was a memorable victory, inasmuch as it almost shattered the menacing power of the Mussulmans in France, so that shortly afterwards they were driven back over the mountains to Spain. In 737, Charles Martel likewise occupied Provence, thus became master of all France, and held it to his death in 741.

## CHAPTER II

### CHARLES MARTEL AND THE PRIMITIVE ORIGIN OF FEUDALISM—THE POPE APPEALS TO THE FRANKS FOR AID

CHARLES MARTEL was not only a great soldier but was also a fine statesman ; and it was owing to him that the Frankish aristocracy now began to be organised in the mode that led to the institution of the feudal order destined to give a new shape to European society, and demanding our attention on account of the great importance it attained in Italy as well as elsewhere. There has been much dispute as to the origin of feudalism, some writers attributing it to a Roman, others to a Germanic source. But the fact is that, like all mediæval institutions, it was the product of a confused medley of Germanic and Roman elements. It is a Germanic aristocracy so far as regards the men who organised and composed it ; nevertheless, it is also an institution of Roman origin, although its primitive elements were sensibly changed by Germanic social conditions.

The fief was undoubtedly a novel form of individual property, and such property was entirely unknown in primitive barbarian society. It combined the Roman conception of man's absolute and personal dominion over the soil, with the equally Roman idea of the dominion of the

law over man. Thus, as soon as Germanic society had been already altered and transformed by the infusion of foreign elements, powerful lords began to arise in Germany as well as in Rome. Having acquired territory by conquest, they became the chiefs of the army and assumed the principal share in the government.

At the same time that Germanic society deserted its original mould and lost its primitive character by adopting this new method, Roman society was also undergoing transformation, although by a different road. By continually enlarging their estates, the great Roman landowners had become masters of huge stretches of country ; but these enormous possessions gave them no political rights, since, in theory at least, all government emanated from the Emperor alone. But fact ran counter to theory, and indeed always ran farther away from it. As the Empire declined, and the strength of the central government diminished, wealthy landowners became masters not only of the actual soil, but of all those who dwelt on and tilled it, and consequently assumed the right of commanding and ruling all the inhabitants of their estates. In Roman society this fact seemed a result of decadence, but, in Germanic society, on the contrary, it seemed the effect of a progressive transformation, whereby its cohesion and strength were increased. Thus both societies, starting from opposite points and advancing in opposite directions, finally met, and mingling together, produced a new social edifice.

The vast Roman estates (*latifundia*), cultivated by slaves or tenants who paid rent in kind, grew ever vaster, by absorbing the lands of neighbouring petty proprietors. For the latter, being overburdened with taxes and debts, always ended by voluntarily ceding their property to richer men, and paying rent for permission to occupy it as their tenants. Thus they forfeited their independence

as well as their property; but gained patrons who freed them from taxes and usury, and allowed them a more bearable life. Large landowners often held public offices which exempted them from certain taxes, and as an increased bit of land here or there caused no addition to the general expenses of the estate, this arrangement was equally advantageous to themselves and their dependents. Accordingly, numbers of petty proprietors hastened to adopt the same course; and, occasionally, whole villages yielded their fields and pastures to some great owner who was already assuming the position of a petty feudal sovereign.

The same changes were occurring in the case of great properties belonging to the Church. In fact, bishops and monastic orders had become great landed proprietors, thanks to the donations of their devoted flocks. Owing to the increasing number of immunities and privileges they obtained, ecclesiastics enjoyed many more advantages than laymen. They soon began to let their huge possessions on leases called *precaria*, or precarious leases, because they could be revoked at a moment's notice, and as the canon rent exacted for these leases was very small, any land ceded on such terms was styled a *benefice*.

The number and value of all the privileges granted, both to laymen and ecclesiastics, soon rose to such proportions as to enfeeble the State and augment the power of the Church. Even as early as the sixth century the great landowner exercised a species of jurisdiction, not only over his slaves, but even over his tenants and dependents. As he was responsible for them to the governing power, the latter never intervened save at his request. In Byzantine Italy, the great proprietors had become commanders of the army, holding all the chief offices and transmitting them by inheritance to their families. The office was connected with the estates of the man who held it,

and accordingly he exercised a double right of jurisdiction, *i.e.*, as a landowner and as a civil or military officer. Thus, an aristocracy was erected consisting of landed proprietors, filling high offices of the State in virtue of their possessions, and of functionaries who grew rich through the offices they held. Sometimes these nobles followed the example we have seen given by Cassiodorus ; they converted their slaves, tenantry, clients, and bailiffs into an armed force to protect their lives and property from all the dangers threatening them in times of invasion.

In conclusion, Roman society was splitting into a host of rich and powerful individuals, styled *honesti*, *clarissimi*, and *nobiles*, who despised the *vilissima plebs* of proletarians. In Germanic society, on the contrary, where the State was unknown, and centralisation undreamt of, social power was naturally in the hands of warriors who despised the weak and helpless, and grew wealthy by force of arms. Thus arose the new aristocracy, which afterwards took shape under the name of feudalism.

In the ecclesiastical as well as in the secular world, the same process was carried on. Prelates, churches, and cloisters conceded grants of land in the shape of *benefices*. Men began to be divided into different classes, corresponding with their respective tenure of land—which was another characteristic of feudalism—and prelates, churches, and cloisters became surrounded by groups of beneficiaries who were vassals in germ. The Merovingian kings were lavish of grants of immunity to bishops, and levied no taxes on Church lands ; hence all fiscal agents were naturally prohibited from setting foot on ecclesiastical territory.

If we now give a glance to the future characteristics of the fief, we shall find that they had previously existed in the Roman world, and were afterwards introduced among the Germanic tribes, but underwent essential change in

the process. There is never anything entirely new in history ; the present and future are invariably built up with fragments of the past.

We already know from the pages of Tacitus that every barbarian king was attended by a *Comitatus* composed of his most trusted familiars, who not only lived with their prince, but fought in his cause side by side with him. The Frankish *Antrustiones*, who resembled the Longobard *Gasindi* and were the precursors of Charlemagne's Paladins, derived their origin from the early barbarian *Comitatus*. The Frankish monarchs made lavish donations both to their trusted familiars and to the leaders of their army, by granting them benefices in land. Public offices too, which, among the Germanic tribes, were always in the royal gift, were likewise granted on beneficiary tenure. Neither the collection of taxes nor the administration of justice was conducted on the public, lawful, and impersonal method that prevailed in the Roman State. Even the obligation of rendering military service was regarded among Germanic tribes rather as a pledge of personal fidelity to the monarch than as a duty to the State. Thus all society became increasingly divided into protectors and protected. And by the time kings began to realise that their newly-created lords threatened to become greater than themselves, and were reducing the monarchy to a confederation of powerful chiefs, only bound to the sovereign by the tie of allegiance, it was too late to remedy the evil.

The first real step in the direction of feudalism was made by Charles Martel. In his time the bishops had become so wealthy that they are believed to have held one-third of all the arable land in France. These vast possessions, with all the immunities attaching to them, not only enhanced the political independence of the bishops with regard to their king, but also their religious inde-

pendence with regard to the Pope. Nevertheless, Charles Martel made them feel the weight of his hand by starting one of the most remarkable reforms achieved in his reign. The necessities of war, and more particularly of his great conflict with the Moslems, obliged him to find means of giving generous remuneration to the leaders of his army. So with little hesitation he proceeded to depose certain bishops and bestow their sees on faithful followers, who were usually men of war. But there was nothing extraordinary in this, at a time when bishops fought at the head of their troops in the same fashion as secular lords. Later on, Charles stripped many cloisters, bishoprics, and churches of a considerable portion of their lands and bestowed them on his generals, who had to bear the expenses of the war and pay the soldiery who fought under their flag, from their own purses. Thus, while damaging the clergy, he rendered the nobles more powerful and more devoted to the crown.

But we cannot be surprised that ecclesiastical tradition should have adopted a bitterly hostile tone, and styled him the enemy of the bishops and despoiler of the Church. Nevertheless, Charles Martel had rendered such signal service to the cause of religion and the Church, that it proved necessary to pardon such acts of spoliation as he had committed for the purpose of bringing the war against the infidels to a triumphant end. Even his German campaigns were advantageous to the faith, for his military expeditions to that country were preceded by religious missions, which laid the basis of the fixed organisation of the Catholic Church, and prepared the way for the conquest by which, in its turn, their own task was facilitated. As we have noted, Ireland had already begun to send out missions for the conversion of the heathen. Later, the work was continued by Anglo-Saxon missionaries, greatest of whom was Winfrith, afterwards known

as St. Boniface. His chief task in Germany, which had been already converted by Irish friars, consisted in organising the Catholic Church there, connecting it with that of France, and placing both under the absolute authority of the Pope. Thus St. Boniface, who was aided by Charles Martel, prepared the way for that monarch's conquests, and for the assimilation of the Germanic tribes, while also helping to promote the future establishment of the Carolingian Empire. Henceforth, popes, princes, and missionaries unconsciously co-operated in the formation of the civil, religious, and military union that was soon to be realised in Charlemagne's new empire. Thanks to St. Boniface, fresh churches and cloisters were everywhere erected, and among them the widely-renowned Monastery of Fulda (744). The Saint continued his labours for many years, until, believing his work in Germany completed, his fiery zeal moved him to seek a fresh field for his apostolic energies, and, accordingly, he went to preach the true faith among the heathen in Friesland, and joyously suffered martyrdom there about the year 754. Considering the state of affairs at this period, it is not astonishing that the Popes should have turned to France for assistance. For we have seen that in 739 Pope Gregory, being threatened by Liutprand, and aware that the Emperor would grant him no help, appealed twice to Charles Martel, and fixed all his hopes in that monarch and the Franks. It has been stated by one writer that the Pope caused Charles Martel to be told at the time that he and the people of Rome intended to separate from the Empire. This statement was made fifty years later in the so-called sequel to the Chronicle of Fredegarius, but, at any rate, it serves to show what ideas were already in the air regarding the existing dissension between Rome and Constantinople, that was to produce far graver consequences at a later date.

## CHAPTER III

PIPPIN IS ELECTED KING OF THE FRANKS AND RECEIVES THE PAPAL CONSECRATION FROM THE HANDS OF ST. BONIFACE—THE POPE, WHEN MENACED BY AISTULF, FLIES TO FRANCE TO SEEK HELP

Charles Martel, who had become in fact, if not in name, the King of the Franks, was succeeded by his sons Carloman and Pippin. Nevertheless, as their legal status was merely that of Mayors of the Palace, it was deemed advisable to release the Merovingian heir, Childeric, from the cloister (743) and place him on the throne. He was the last of the *rois fainéants*, and the merest shadow of a king.

It might have been expected that a fierce and sanguinary struggle would break out between the two brothers; but Carloman, on the contrary, after perpetrating cruel massacres in a campaign against the Alemanni (746), retired from the world in disgust, first to a monastery he had founded on Mount Soracte, and then to Monte Cassino; so that Pippin was left to reign alone. Then, however, it became still more apparent that, legally speaking, Childeric was the only legitimate sovereign, although in appearance and in fact an utterly dispossessed king. The question could only be solved by violent means, yet, if left unsolved, Pippin would have always

remained in the false position of an usurper. Hence he decided to apply to the Pope, Zacharias III., whose religious authority might achieve what could not be done by the sword. Accordingly, he despatched a State embassy to Rome to ask if it were lawful that a man who did absolutely nought should bear the kingly title, rather than he who really carried on the government and fulfilled all the duties of a sovereign. None, indeed, save the Pope could release subjects from their oath of fealty and quiet their consciences, by putting an end to this abnormal state of things.

What reply was to be expected from Zacharias III.? The new dynasty already existed *de facto;* it had a firm grasp of the monarchy, had fought in defence of the faith, and was the only line able to afford the Church the assistance that no other power was able or willing to grant.

The principle of hereditary succession to the throne had never been sanctioned by the Empire, and among barbarians the monarchy was elective in a general way. Accordingly, the Pope made reply that, provided it were advantageous to the country, and truly for the public good, it would be fitting that the man who exercised the functions of royalty should assume the title of king. Thereupon Pippin resolved to accomplish his *coup d'état.* At the assembly of nobles convened at Soissons, in November, 751, he was solemnly raised to the throne and proclaimed king, "by the counsel and consent of all the Franks, with the approval of the Holy See, by the choice of all France, by the episcopal rite of consecration, and by the sworn allegiance of the nobles." The election of the sovereign was effected in the Frankish manner, and then St. Boniface, at the head of the bishops, performed the ceremony of anointing him in the name of the Pope, a rite recalling the consecration of King Saul by the hand

of Samuel. The wretched Childeric received the tonsure, and was then confined in a monastery together with his son.

If the reader will now refer to all that we have said on the subject, he will promptly recognise how many weighty motives were urging the Papacy to side with the Franks and secure their protection. But Zacharias III., who wished to stand well with all men, had held an interview with Liutprand and done his best to arrange a lasting peace with him. The Longobard king had promised to restore to the patrimony of the Church the lands he had wrested from it in the Exarchate and Pentapolis ; he was also pledged to recapture and restore to the Pope the four castles in the Roman Duchy which Thrasimund had unlawfully seized. Nevertheless, the terms of the proposed twenty years' peace were hardly arranged before Liutprand infringed them by occupying the Spoletan territory and bestowing it on one of his nephews, while he appointed Gisulf, son of Romwald II., to the dukedom of Benevento (742). However, after another meeting with the Pope at Turin, he presently gave up the four castles and fulfilled the greater part of his promises. But on his return to Pavia in 743 he again despatched an army to the Exarchate, for the purpose of attacking Ravenna. Then, once more remembering the entreaties of Pope Zacharias, who had sought him at Pavia the previous year, he was on the point of yielding to them when his life came to an end in January, 744.

His son Hildebrand succeeded him on the throne, but proved so incapable that he was speedily deposed to make room for Ratchis, the Duke of Friuli, of whose five years' reign few particulars are known. He abdicated in 749, and afterwards retired from the world and became a monk. The next king, Aistulf, was valiant and impetuous in war, but a very poor statesman. He advanced on Ravenna, and by capturing that city put an end to the Exarchate.

Immediately afterwards he marched against Rome (752), where Zacharias had recently died. Stephen II. was then raised to the Papal chair, but only survived his election for three days. His successor assumed the same name, and by reason of the brevity of the late reign was also styled Stephen II. instead of III. (752–57). This Stephen was a well-skilled statesman, and proved a great Pope. His first act was to send ambassadors to Aistulf to arrange a treaty of peace that, although intended to endure for forty years, was broken in four months with no possibility of renewal (752). Various other embassies were sent to open negotiations, but the Longobard king only replied by threatening to seize the Duchy of Rome. So there was nothing to hope from that quarter.

Accordingly, the Pope began to treat with the Empire, and when John the *Silentiarius*, or captain of the Imperial Guard, came over as ambassador from Constantinople, he sent him with his own brother Paul on a mission to Aistulf, to demand the retrocession of the cities and lands unlawfully usurped by the Longobards in the Exarchate and Pentapolis—*ut Reipublicae loca . . . usurpata proprio restituerèt dominio.*[1] Aistulf only made reply that he would treat of those affairs directly with the Emperor through ambassadors of his own. Thereupon the Silentiarius withdrew, and the Pope sent envoys to accompany him back to Constantinople, to advise the Court that as no reliance could be placed in the Longobards, it would be better to send over an army to protect Rome and all Italy from their aggressions. So far the Pope seems to have been on friendly terms with the Emperor. In fact, Stephen II. had appealed to him when Aistulf, after seizing the Exarchate "*fremens ut leo*," threatened to vent the full measure of his wrath on Rome and the Roman people. The danger was really great and

[1] "Liber Pontificalis," i. 442.

most pressing. Indeed, the Pope offered up solemn prayers and litanies, walking barefoot and sprinkled with ashes at the head of a great procession to St. Peter's, Santa Maria Maggiore, and St. Paul's, with the treaty of peace violated by Aistulf dangling from the crucifix that was borne before him. Meanwhile neither aid nor hope of aid was forthcoming from Constantinople, and affairs seemed at a desperate pass. Hence, what could have been more natural than the idea of appealing to the Franks? Pippin was not likely to forget that he owed his consecration to the Papacy. Therefore Stephen II. applied to him and caused him to be informed that he, the Pope, wished to visit him in state, but first desired to receive a formal invitation, not only to save his own dignity, but also as a protection against any hindrance to his journey on the part of Aistulf. The King of the Franks hastened to show his goodwill to the Pope, but before taking a step which might involve the necessity of plunging into war, he wished to be assured of the consent of his nobles, since, in case of need, it would have been difficult to conduct an army to Italy without their support. The Frankish lords had no reason to feel any special dislike to the Longobards, seeing that the latter had so promptly answered their call for help during the war against the Saracens. Thereupon the Pope, being a shrewd politician, addressed a letter to the Frankish nobles, that has been preserved to this day, in which he exhorted them to show no failing in their devotion to St. Peter and Holy Church. Accordingly, when Pippin called them together in assembly, a resolution was quickly passed to the effect that a State embassy should be dispatched to Rome to urge the Pope to visit France, with the fullest assurances of welcome. The ambassadors selected were two great Frankish personages—Chrodegang, Bishop of Metz, and the *most glorious* Duke Autichar. They reached Rome in 753,

when Aistulf's Longobards had just seized Ceccano, a town belonging to the Roman duchy. Shortly before (in September, 753) the Silentiarius John had come back from Constantinople charged with the mission of persuading the Pope to go in person to Aistulf for the purpose of prevailing on him to restore the lands he had wrested from the Empire. So, on the 14th October, 753, Stephen II., with the Silentiarius, the two Frank ambassadors, and a numerous retinue, went to Pavia to attempt to induce the Longobard to restore his ill-gotten territory to its lawful owner, *propria restitueret propriis.*[2] But nothing was gained by this step, for Aistulf accepted the gifts offered him, but refused to yield an inch of soil. Thereupon the Pope continued his journey, and, despite the King's efforts to change his purpose, crossed the Alps and entered France. In the month of December, when still at about a hundred miles' distance from the manor of Ponthion, between Vitry and Bar-le-Duc, he was met by Pippin's first-born son Charles, then a mere lad, but afterwards known to history as Charles the Great, or Charlemagne. Then, on the 6th January, 754, the King himself rode forth to welcome the Pontiff, and, dismounting from his horse, escorted him on foot for a considerable distance. The august visitor was received with great ceremony at Ponthion, and the joyous crowd chanted sacred hymns in his honour. The moment they entered the palace the Pope besought the King to personally champion the cause of St. Peter and of the Roman Republic, *causam Beati Petri et Reipublicæ Romanorum.* And the King unhesitatingly swore "to win back the Exarchate and the other lost cities and rights of the Republic." But why this change of tone? After demanding the restitution of territory to the Empire, we now hear only of St. Peter and the Roman Republic, and

[2] "Liber Pontificalis," i. 446 and foll.

henceforth we continually hear of the Republic, of St. Peter, and of God's holy Church, but no syllable more concerning the Empire.

After Aistulf's explicit refusal, it was obvious that the stolen territory could be only regained by force of arms. Therefore the Pope, being naturally obliged to think first of his own interests, must have rejoiced to perceive on reaching France that Pippin, although most willing to fight for him and the Church, was nowise inclined to go to war for the Emperor's advantage. Whatever territories he should win by the sword, provided he did not claim them as his own by right of conquest, piety might induce him to cede to the Church and to the head of the Church, but never to others. Besides, even the Longobards would prefer that they should be yielded to the Pope, from whom there might be a chance of wresting them anew, rather than see them in the hands of either the Emperor or the Franks. Therefore it was natural that the shrewd Pontiff should endeavour to profit by the situation. So in his speeches and letters he said nothing about the lands being restored to the Empire, and only spoke of the necessity of enforcing their restitution to Rome, to St. Peter, to the Church. Meanwhile, Pippin had invited him to spend the winter in the abbey of St. Denis, near Paris, and thence both the King and his guest addressed repeated missives to Aistulf, urging him, for the avoidance of bloodshed, peacefully to "restore to the Republic and Holy Church their lawful possessions and privileges." In short, it would appear that they now demanded for the Pope both the Exarchate and the Pentapolis, of which the Longobards had robbed the Empire. From the moment that Aistulf had seized the Exarchate the Popes had conceived the idea of succeeding to the Imperial rule in Italy. They did not desire the Longobards to become preponderant by the retention

of those provinces. Accordingly, if Pippin should refuse to restore the latter to the Empire after he had won them, it would be an excellent opportunity to augment the strength of the Church by persuading him to cede her his conquests.

This is why Stephen omitted all mention of the Empire and began to speak of the Republic and people of Rome, which, according to the ideas of the period, was under the special protection of St. Peter, of whom the Pope, as visible Head of the Church, was the earthly representative. The Roman people had elected the Emperor, and still elected the Pope. They were therefore identical with the Empire and the sacred Republic, which, in common parlance, was then confused with the Church. Hence it seemed the simplest thing in the world to substitute for the Empire the Church and the Pope. Even the four domains or castles, which Liutprand had snatched from the Roman Duchy, that was already considered, at least theoretically, to be the Pope's legitimate property, had been restored to "St. Peter" by Liutprand himself.

But in point of fact, Aistulf, unconcerned with subtle distinctions of this kind, was resolved to yield nothing to any one. Hence war had to be made. Pippin summoned his nobles to two Councils, the first of which assembled at Braisne, a short distance from Soissons, on March 7, 754, and the second at Quierzy, near Laon, on Easter Day, April 14th. War was decided upon at the latter. There is also mention of a document recording Pippin's solemn pledge that the territories he purposed to conquer would be restored by him to the Pope. Some historians express strong doubts as to the existence of the said document, but at all events, whether in writing or not, the promise was really made and subsequently fulfilled.

All this time, the Pope had been overwhelmed with

anxiety. Besides the necessity of crossing the Alps in late autumn, the raw winter season in France, the persistent opposition of some of the nobles to the war, were more than enough to disturb his mind and injure his health. In addition to all this, Pippin's brother Carloman, at the instigation of Aistulf, it would seem, suddenly left the monastery of Monte Cassino and came to France, just at this time, to plead with his brother in favour of the Longobard cause. This naturally increased the Pope's anxiety and was also most irritating to Pippin, who naturally feared that his brother's reappearance might awaken his nephew's hopes of succeeding to the paternal throne. But what could a monk accomplish against the authority of the Pope, and against the power of a sovereign who was master of the whole united realm? In fact, Carloman was speedily forced to withdraw to a cloister at Vienne, on the Rhone, and died there shortly afterwards. Even his sons were compelled to receive the tonsure.

At last, overburdened by all his troubles, Stephen II. fell sick, and during his illness, legend tells us that St. Denis, St. Peter, and St. Paul appeared to him in a vision and promised him entire recovery if he would erect a new altar in the church of St. Denis. So, by July 24, 754, not only was the new altar built, but the same church witnessed a solemn event that was a proof of the Pope's fine acumen and perseverance. For on that day, at the high altar of St. Denis, he anointed King Pippin, crowned him and Queen Bertha, his wife, and also consecrated their two sons, Charles and Carloman. "But, surely," the reader might exclaim, "Pippin had been already crowned and consecrated by St. Boniface, by order of the Pope. For what reason was the ceremony repeated?" To which we may reply, that not only was consecration by the Pope's own hand far more efficacious, but in likewise consecrating

the Queen and her sons, he made the whole dynasty sacred. On the same day, in fact, Stephen forbade the Frankish nobles, under pain of excommunication, to elect any future king "descended from other loins." Thus, not only were the rights of the Merovingians discarded for ever, but also any claim that might be asserted by Carloman's sons.

Besides this, Pope Stephen, in the act of anointing Pippin, also gave him the title of Patrician, a point that has occasioned much dispute, inasmuch as that title was solely conferred by the Emperor on highly illustrious personages, such as Odovacar, Theodoric, and the Exarchs; yet now the Pope bestowed it on Pippin, without one word of protest from the Emperor. It is suggested by some writers that the Emperor may have invested Stephen with the Power of conferring the title, when he sent him to obtain the restitution of the Imperial provinces. But on arriving in France, and grasping the real state of affairs, the Pope might have changed his mind, and on deciding to assume the place of the Empire in Italy, may have conceived that he could also confer, in his own right, the rank of Patrician. The title was simply honorary, but only given, as a rule, to those who already filled lofty dignities. Thus the Pope gave it to King Pippin as the Champion of the Church. In fact, from that moment, the sovereign is styled, indistinctly, either the Patrician, or the Defender of the Church.

## CHAPTER IV

PIPPIN AND THE FRANKS DESCEND INTO ITALY AND CONQUER THE LONGOBARDS—DONATION OF THE EXARCHATE AND THE PENTAPOLIS TO THE POPE—DEATH OF AISTULF — DESIDERIUS MADE KING OF THE LONGOBARDS — DISORDERS IN ROME — ELECTION AND DEATH OF POPE PAUL I.

During the summer of 754, shortly after his consecration, Pippin gathered together his army for the Italian expedition, but without omitting a final attempt to settle the question by peaceful means and even by offering Aistulf a large sum of money. But all was in vain, and the Frankish army received marching orders. The Franks were led by their own King, accompanied by the Pope and his chaplain, the Abbot Fulrad of St. Denis, and other prelates. After passing the Mont Cenis, the vanguard of the Franks encountered the whole of the Longobard army at Le Chiuse, near Susa, and bore the full brunt of its charge. But owing to the narrowness of the gorge, the superior strength of the foe was of no avail, and they were so thoroughly worsted by the small body of Franks, that their defeat was attributed to a miracle.

Thereupon Aistulf had to fly to Pavia, where he was soon besieged and brought to terms. He was to give back Ravenna and several other captured cities,

to swear never again to invade the Roman Duchy, and to give forty hostages as a warranty of his good faith. According to the "Liber Pontificalis" (i. 451), these conditions were to be formally recorded in a *written page*. The territories thus regained were ceded by Pippin to the Pope, who without further delay sought to assume the position of the Emperor in Italy. This step seemed all the more desirable and urgent now that the Emperor had assembled a Synod (753) which condemned the worship of images, and stigmatised it as a new form of idolatry. But when both the Pontiff and Pippin had withdrawn to their own dominions, Aistulf, after having ceded Narni to the Franks, not only violated the agreement by refusing to yield any other place to either power, but marched his army into the Roman Duchy, sacking even the churches on his road. By the 1st January, 756, he was encamped before the walls of Rome, and threatening to put all the citizens to the sword unless they opened the gates and surrendered the Pope's person to him.

Thereupon, Stephen sent one letter after another to Pippin, and hurried off State embassies to carry news of the "massacres and iniquities of the infamous Longobards." The last of these missives was addressed to the King and his sons in the name of St. Peter himself, who after declaring that the injuries inflicted on the population and on all places, sacred and profane, were of a kind to draw tears from stones, ended by invoking the speedy assistance of the Frankish people chosen by God for the defence of the Church. The slightest delay in bringing aid would now be a capital sin, for which God would call them to account.

Pippin was not deaf to the Saint's prayer, and in the spring of 756 again crossed the Alps to punish Aistulf, who, abandoning the siege of Rome, which had already

lasted three months, hurried back to Pavia. Thence he despatched an army against the Franks ; but the latter had passed Mont Cenis and proceeded on their march after again routing the Longobards. During his progress Pippin fell in with an ambassador from Constantinople, who tried to induce him to give back to the Empire all the territory unlawfully appropriated by the Longobard king. But he plainly declared that he had not come to wage war in Italy "for any worldly end or in favour of any mortal man, but for love of St. Peter and for the remission of his sins." After which he lay siege to Pavia and again forced Aistulf to surrender. This time, however, the conqueror naturally exacted harsher terms than in 754. Besides having to furnish a large contribution towards the expenses of the war and an annual tribute, the Longobard was obliged to cede a greater number of cities and deliver fresh hostages. The "Liber Pontificalis" gives a list of those cities, which includes Comacchio, Ravenna, and the whole belt of country between the sea and the Apennines from Forli to Sinigaglia, but does not comprise the Marches of Ancona, Faenza, Bologna, Imola, or Ferrara. The stipulation chiefly concerned the Exarchate and the Pentapolis, but within the shrunken limits to which those provinces had been reduced by Longobard conquests anterior to Aistulf's reign. When the treaty was drawn up, the Abbot Fulrad was sent in person with a sufficient escort of Frankish soldiers to take formal possession of the cities, receive their keys, and even exact fresh hostages as a measure of precaution. The keys were consigned to the Pope in Rome, together with Pippin's Deed of Donation "to St. Peter, to the Holy Roman Republic, and to all succeeding Pontiffs." This written Act of Donation was placed in the Chapel of the "Confession" of St. Peter and, according to the author of

the "Life of Stephen II.," was still there when he was writing that work ("Liber Pontificalis," i. 453). As we shall see, the Popes soon began to demand still greater gifts.

In the same year, 756, a few months after Pippin had returned to France, Aistulf's life ended. He had been a sincere Catholic, had founded churches and convents, and although he had carried off many relics and skeletons of Saints from the Roman Campagna, these thefts were committed for the benefit of the churches of his own realm. But his religious zeal did not prevent him from being continually at strife with the Pope. He was valiant in the field, but—like most of the Longobard sovereigns—pursued a capricious and inconsequent policy, that caused him to lose in the second half of his reign all that he had won in the first. After his death the Longobards were on the verge of civil war regarding the succession. Ratchis left the cloister of Monte Cassino for the purpose of succeeding to his brother's throne, but Desiderius, Duke of Tuscany, was the rival candidate, and by promising large concessions to Rome, obtained the Papal support. So the Pope persuaded Ratchis to resume his monastic life; wrote a letter to Pippin vaunting the merits of Desiderius and his numerous promises to the Church; and therefore implored the King of the Franks to show him favour and encourage his good intentions. The Pope also urged Pippin to complete the enterprise he had so happily begun, by obtaining the restitution to St. Peter and the Church of all the territories which, before Aistulf's day, had been comprised in the Pentapolis and the Exarchate. It was impossible to govern that land while long-united populations remained detached from it. And Stephen concluded by saying: "Now that Aistulf, the servant of the Evil One and devourer

of Christian flesh and blood, has ceased to live, and that, thanks to the aid of yourself and your Franks, Desiderius, the good and most merciful, occupies his throne, we beseech you not only to spur him forward on the right road, but also to join with him in the work of freeing us from the pestilent malice of the Greeks, and winning back for us those lands of which the Church has been unlawfully deprived."

The point was plain. New requests were now made, instead of the mere fulfilment of King Pippin's former promises. The Pope insisted on having the Exarchate and Pentapolis, with the addition of all the districts formerly included within their boundaries; while also demanding the restoration of other Church lands, in different parts of the country, which had been wrongly appropriated by Longobards or Byzantines. It seemed a good opportunity for obtaining the fulfilment of all that Desiderius had offered in return for the great services rendered him by Rome in securing him the throne. However, it soon became clear that even this new King of the Longobards had no intention of being true to his word. In fact, after ceding Faenza and Ferrara, he would yield nothing more. But as Stephen II. breathed his last on the 26th April, 757, he was spared the pain of this cruel breach of faith.

The ensuing Papal election was somewhat riotous and began to give indications of the important changes which were about to occur in Rome, owing to the new line of policy adopted by the Popes. For the Donation of Pippin rendered the Head of the Church a temporal ruler. Being the sovereign lord of the Exarchate and Pentapolis, he naturally wished to be likewise the real lord of the Roman Duchy. In fact, from this moment, there was no longer a Duke of Rome, for the Pope insisted on filling that dignitary's place. But this

innovation stirred the wrath of the secular nobles or *Judices de Militia*, who were in command of the army, and they waged the fiercest strife against the ecclesiastical nobility or *Judices de Clero*, who, in virtue of the new authority asserted by the Pope, claimed the right of exercising command over Rome. Fortunately, however, on the 29th May, 757, the brother of the late Pope was raised to the Chair and consecrated under the name of Paul I. Speedily discovering that little reliance could be placed in Desiderius, the Pope turned to Pippin, notifying the fact of his accession in the same style in which it was formerly announced to the Exarch, and asking the King's help against the nobles, who were growing more and more turbulent. Pippin wrote to the latter, exhorting them to yield obedience to the Pope, and the letter still exists in which the *Senatus atque universi populi generalitas* made reply to "the most excellent and victorious Lord Pippin, the chosen of God, King of the Franks and Patrician of Rome." In it they promised obedience to "our common Father," the Pope.

But the worst trouble was the strife with the Longobards, and it was now farther complicated by the changeable temper of Desiderius, which was fated to be the ruin of himself and his kingdom. When the Dukes of Benevento and Spoleto were preparing to discard their allegiance to him and adhere to the Pope and the Franks instead, he tried to maintain his authority by forcibly deposing them at once and replacing them by men he could trust. His next idea was to apply to the Emperor Constantine V. (nicknamed "Copronymos"), promising to assist him to reconquer the Exarchate and Pentapolis. But on perceiving that there was nothing to be gained by this means, since the Emperor was engaged in other enterprises elsewhere, Desiderius

turned once more to the Pope, who, albeit with much reluctance and distrust, consented to grant him audience. Undoubtedly the Pope was in a very awkward position. No assistance could be expected from Pippin, who was waging war with Aquitaine and Saxony, while at the same time he was full of anxiety with regard to the new difficulties raised by the Emperor, inasmuch as the usual political strife with the East was now complicated by the religious conflict touching the worship of images. In fact, Constantine V., profiting by the attitude of the Frankish clergy, who seemed opposed to the Pope on the question of the Trinity as well as of the Images, was trying to arrange a theological agreement with Pippin, by which he hoped to smooth the way for a political treaty of peace. But although King Pippin was willing to discuss the matter, he ended by remaining faithful to the Church of Rome.

It was plainly one of those periods of transition, when the aspect of affairs varies from day to day, so that no one can adhere to any fixed line of policy. Pippin was negotiating with the Emperor while allied with the Pope, who was continually dispatching letters to him imploring the protection of the Franks against the heretic Byzantines, the foes of Holy Church. In his despair, Paul next applied to the Longobards, although they were enemies both of Rome and the Franks, and although both he and his predecessors had been driven to open war with them. Meanwhile, the Emperor tried to come to terms with the Franks, who had robbed him of the Exarchate and Pentapolis by handing them over to the Pope, whom he was now inciting them to attack.

But Paul I. was stricken by death on the 28th June, 767, King Pippin died on the 24th September, 768, and these two events naturally led to another serious change in the world's affairs.

## CHAPTER V

NEW AND MOST ALARMING DISORDERS IN ROME—ELECTION OF POPE STEPHEN III.—MARRIAGE OF CHARLES, KING OF THE FRANKS, WITH DESIDERATA, DAUGHTER OF DESIDERIUS—PERSECUTION OF THE POPE'S ENEMIES—DEATH OF STEPHEN III.

THE death of Pope Paul I. proved the signal for another and more violent outbreak of party strife. The consequences were now realised of having abolished the Imperial authority in Rome, the Exarchate and the Pentapolis, without substituting any other authority than that of the Pope, who, being unarmed, was powerless to enforce it. The Roman Duchy, which included about the same territory comprised in the present province of Rome, was first mentioned in the "Liber Pontificalis" (i. 392) in the year 712, whereas the Roman army (*Exercitus Romanus*) was already recorded in 638 and 643 ("Liber Pontificalis," i. 328, 331, and 395, *Note* 28). This army was divided in bands (*Scholæ*), officered by the very powerful secular nobles of the city and Campagna. The Commander-in-chief was always the Duke, who was appointed by the Empire down to 727 ("Liber Pontificalis," i. 404) and elected by the nobles after that date. But in Pippin's time there ceased to be a Duke of Rome, inasmuch as the Pope was then

named the head of the city and dukedom. Then, however, the Pope stood between two fires amid the rival pretensions of the lay nobles, who held command of the army and partly, at least, of the City, and those of the ecclesiastical hierarchy who, being charged with the administration of the Church and all her vast possessions, were certainly no less powerful in Rome than the secular party. So, when Paul I. drew near his end, the hostile factions seemed on the verge of open conflict.

In fact, the Pope was still living when Toto, Duke of Nepi, hurriedly collecting as many followers as he could find in the Campagna, rushed into Rome with his three brothers, Constantine, Passivus, and Paschalis, and forcibly carried the election of the first of the three. But as this Constantine was a layman, the Bishop of Palestrina was compelled at the sword's point, and in spite of the most earnest remonstrances, to successively ordain this strange candidate as cleric, sub-deacon, and deacon, after which Constantine was proclaimed Pope the same day, 28th of June, 767. He only occupied the Papal Chair for thirteen months, which were filled with riot and bloodshed, for the ecclesiastical nobles whom he had stripped of many profitable offices made armed protest against the irregularity of his election. It would have been natural for this party to side with the Franks, but knowing that Pippin had too many wars on his hands to afford any help at this juncture, they were obliged to have recourse to the Longobards, and speedily obtained favour with Desiderius. So, with the consent of the Longobard king, Christopher, *Primicerius* of the Papal Chancery, and his son Sergius, who was *Secundicerius*, were enabled to collect troops in the Duchy of Spoleto, and on the 29th of July, 768, appeared before the San Pancrazio Gate and came to blows with their adversaries, the secular nobles. The latter were worsted, having

traitors in their midst, who, when the battle seemed going well for their party, treacherously attacked their own comrades from behind, and thus compassed their defeat. The Pope's brother, Passivus, and a few faithful followers sought safety in the Lateran, but were all seized and imprisoned. Then a Longobard priest named Waldipert, who had given assistance to the victors, collected an armed mob of friends and caused a certain priest named Philip to be elected Pope. This man was hurriedly consecrated in the Lateran, mounted the Chair of St. Peter, and bestowed his benediction on the people. But this election being solely advantageous to the Longobard faction, was displeasing to the Roman aristocracy, who had only raised the standard of revolt in order to secure the predominance of their own party. Accordingly, they soon compelled Philip to renounce his high dignity, and gathering all their adherents, the army, people, and clergy, procured a new election, by which Stephen III., who had been the trusted friend of Paul I., was raised to the Papal throne (1st of August, 768).

But although the validity of this fresh election was ultimately recognised, it failed to restore the public peace, for, previously to the consecration of the new Pontiff (on the 7th of August), the victorious nobles were determined to take revenge for the nomination of Constantine. Accordingly, they fell upon some of the latter's adherents, and, in the barbarous Byzantine fashion, tore out their eyes and tongues. The excited mob afterwards broke into the house in which the practically deposed Pope was confined, and, overwhelming him with insults, dragged him forth, and, placing him on a horse with a woman's saddle, conducted him to a monastery prison. On the 6th of August he was led thence to the Lateran Basilica, where the assembled bishops formally degraded him, by tearing the pallium from his neck and stripping

from his feet the pontifical sandals. Soon afterwards his foes again dragged him from the monastery, tore out his eyes, and left him stretched half dead in the road. Others suffered the same fate. Nor was the priest Waldipert spared, for knowing that he had secured the election of Philip, the other deposed Pope, the Romans feared that he might now concert some plan of vengeance with his Longobard comrades. For this reason many who had been of his party shortly before now hunted him down with murderous intent. He fled to St. Mary of the Martyrs (the Pantheon), and when his foes invaded the sanctuary clung desperately to the holy images in the hope of thus saving his life. But he was brutally dragged through the streets to the Lateran Field, where his eyes were torn out, and he died in a short time from gangrene of the sockets. Stephen III. made no attempt to prevent these atrocious deeds, and can hardly be excused by the fact that, with the best will in the world, he might have found it very difficult to stop them.

In April, 769, a Synod was convened in Rome to arrange the necessary measures for the prevention of scandalous scenes at future elections, and twelve Frankish bishops also attended the assembly. But the proceedings of this Synod were far from pacific. The wretched ex-Pope Constantine, who was already blinded, *jam extra oculos*, was called upon to explain how, being a layman, he should have dared to allow himself to be chosen Pope. He replied by declaring that he had been forced to yield to the will of the mob, and asked pardon for his sins. But the following day, when he tried to extenuate his guilt by remarking that, before his time, laymen had been made bishops at Ravenna and Naples, all the members of the Synod were stirred to the wildest indignation. They refused to hear another word from him, and ordered the attendants to beat him and drive him from their presence.

The decree by which his election had been proclaimed and the documents of his pontificate were then burned. Stephen III., the bishops, priests, and all the citizens present in the church knelt in prayer, doing penitence for having tolerated a Pope so irregularly elected and for having accepted the sacrament from his hands. Also, the election of any layman to the Papal Chair was prohibited under pain of Anathema. It was further decreed that no one who was not a cardinal-deacon or priest should ever be elected Pope, also that none should come armed to the spot where the election took place, and that in the future the right of electing the Pope was to be limited to cardinals, primates of the Church, and the clergy of Rome. Neither the people nor the army were to have any voice in the matter, but merely the right of acclaiming the Pope when elected.

The deplorable condition of things in the Eternal City now became increasingly critical owing to the aspect of affairs abroad. For, on the death of King Pippin, the Frankish realm had been divided between his two sons, Charles and Carloman, who were soon at serious odds. Their quarrels robbed the Pope of all hope of receiving help from the Franks, and consequently encouraged the daring of the Roman nobles in general, and particularly that of Christopher and Sergius. These men had deposed Constantine and Philip in turn ; and having carried the election of Stephen III., considered themselves entitled to tyrannise over him, and be absolute masters in every way. In the struggle between Carloman and Charles they sided with the former, gaining his favour in despite of the Pope, who was disgusted by their arrogance. Thus the disputes of the two Frankish princes caused division even in Italy, for whoever declared himself opposed to either was immediately taken into favour by the other. Consequently party strife was fed throughout the peninsula, and especially

in Rome and Ravenna. In the latter city a struggle was going on between the various aspirants to the episcopal see, who were only agreed on the point of rendering the bishopric more and more independent of the Pope, heedless of the fact that the Exarchate had been ceded outright to the latter by Pippin.

Meanwhile, the widowed Queen Bertha was striving her best to bring about a reconciliation between her sons, the two kings of the Franks. To this end she came to Italy for the purpose of allying them by marriage with the Longobards. Her efforts led to the conclusion of a match between Charles and Desiderata, the daughter of King Desiderius. There was also some parleying about another Longobard bride for Carloman. On hearing of these negotiations the Pope fell into the wildest fit of rage, foreseeing that any tie of kindred between Longobards and Franks would cause the overthrow of all his long-cherished schemes and most seriously endanger the interests of the Church. In fact, the letter he addressed to the two brothers upon the subject was conceived in such violent terms that, although it is comprised in the Carolingian Codex, some writers dispute its authenticity. He stigmatised as "diabolic" any alliance formed between "the most noble Frankish race and the iniquitous Longobard tribe." He appeared to be under the impression that both brothers were already married men, and that consequently the new marriages proposed would be mere acts of concubinage. He wound up by saying: "We have laid this our letter of admonition on the tomb of St. Peter, and having celebrated Mass over it, now dispatch it from this place with tears in our eyes."

Charles, however, had no lawful wife, so there was no obstacle to his union with Desiderata; the marriage was duly performed; and the Pope was forced to accept the accomplished fact. What was the use of angering

Charles and Desiderata? Besides, Christopher and Sergius were becoming more and more insupportable; they were treating with Carloman, and the latter had sent his ambassador, Dodo, to them in Rome, together with a few soldiers, so that they were more audacious and arrogant than before.

Besides, since the deposition of Philip and the murder of Waldipert, these men had naturally become enemies of the Longobards, and therefore Queen Bertha was enabled to re-establish friendly relations between the Pope and King Desiderius, who, according to his wont, was again lavish of promises.

Under the pretext of making a religious pilgrimage, the Longobard king now journeyed towards Rome with a considerable following of soldiers, for the purpose of meeting the Pope in St. Peter's and assisting him to dispose of Christopher and Sergius, whose attitude was more threatening than ever. But these nobles were too much on the alert to be caught unawares (771). They had already summoned their adherents from the Campagna, called friendly citizens to arms, and incorporated them with the small force of Frankish soldiers brought to Rome by Carloman's enemy, Dodo. Accordingly, all was prepared for the revolt by the time Desiderius and the Pope met in conference at St. Peter's. But Stephen III. had also been on the watch, and entrusted his defence to one of the superiors of the Curia, the Chamberlain or *Cubicularius* Paul, nicknamed Afiarta, a man of much daring. So, the moment the Pope issued from St. Peter's to return to the Lateran, Paul promptly called the people to arms and started a riot. Thereupon, Christopher and Sergius rushed to the Lateran with all their adherents and demanded the surrender of the Chamberlain. But, to the detriment of their own cause, their turbulent followers, having broken into the palace, could not abstain from

sacking it, and rushed, sword in hand, to the Basilica, where the Pope had sought refuge. What followed next is not precisely known. Stephen said in one of his letters that he was in danger of being killed ; but the day after he went with Afiarta and a strong escort of armed men to another interview with Desiderius at St. Peter's. It seems certain, however, that Christopher and Sergius did no violence to the Pope, either because they shrank from assaulting the visible Head of the Church in the Lord's temple, or because their followers deserted them at that moment, or, still more probably, because Afiarta appeared in time to defeat their purpose. At any rate, it is certain that after Stephen had gone off to St. Peter's the following morning, the two rebels were seized by the defenders of the Pope, and the latter gave orders that they were to be detained in the Basilica to a late hour of the night, when it would be easier, he said, under cover of darkness, for the Chamberlain to escort them safely back to the city. But, on the contrary, just as they reached the gate, a band of ruffians, lurking in the shadow of the wall, suddenly attacked the wretched men and plucked out their eyes. Christopher was dragged to the Monastery of St. Agatha, and died there three days later. Sergius was incarcerated in the Lateran but disappeared after a time.

These cruel acts of vengeance had been committed at the secret instigation of Desiderius, who now returned to Pavia, but it is hard to believe that the Pope had no share in them.

Such was the end of the two veteran chiefs of the ecclesiastical lords, who first joined with the Longobards and afterwards betrayed them. But Pope Stephen, being always weak and changeable, only escaped from one tyranny to fall under another. The Chamberlain Afiarta, backed by the Longobard faction, now played the tyrant in Rome, to the vast disgust of the Franks. Carloman

indeed had favoured Christopher and Sergius ; but even his brother Charles must have looked askance at the triumph of the Longobards in Rome. The Pope tried to exculpate himself in the eyes of Queen Bertha and her sons by laying all the blame on the ambassador Dodo, who, so he declared, "had sided with the diabolical promoters of a riot that had seriously endangered his (the Pope's) life in the Lateran. The cruelties committed upon Christopher and Sergius on their way to the city had been done entirely against his will, by certain common malefactors, who burst so unexpectedly from their hiding-places, that his own men arrived too late to prevent the crime." The Pope concluded his letter with eulogies on Desiderius, who, he declared, had saved his life, and was already beginning to fulfil his pledge of restoring the usurped territory. But none of this was true, as was soon ascertained.

The general aspect of affairs was now considerably changed, both in Italy and abroad. Charles, who had always been hostile to the Franks, presently repudiated his wife Desiderata and sent her back to her father, an act which necessarily widened the breach between the two nations. On the 4th of December, 771, Carloman died, leaving a son only twelve months old ; so the nobles elected Charles as his brother's successor, in order that the kingdom should gain strength by being united under his rule. Again changing his policy, the Pope drew apart from Desiderius—whose promises had not been fulfilled—and adopted friendlier relations with Charles. He greatly resented the conduct of the Longobard king, for on reminding him of the pledges he had given, the latter merely replied that the Pope should rather feel satisfaction and gratitude for all benefits received, inasmuch as he owed his deliverance from the tyranny of Christopher and Sergius entirely to him. But all these excitements and

anxious vicissitudes seriously disturbed the weak mind of the Pope, whose health was also impaired by the first attacks of a mortal disease. Then his Chamberlain, Afiarta, gave him no peace. This personage was spinning his intrigues in order to twist the coming election to his own advantage, and therefore arbitrarily banished or imprisoned all the nobles who were adverse to himself and his party. Stephen finally died about the 1st of February, 772, and this event produced other important changes in Roman and Italian affairs.

## CHAPTER VI

THE ELECTION OF ADRIAN I. — THE CONDEMNATION AND DEATH OF AFIARTA — CHARLES, KING OF THE FRANKS MAKES A DESCENT UPON ITALY — DEFEAT OF THE LONGOBARDS AND SIEGE OF PAVIA — CHARLES ENTERS ROME AND SPENDS EASTER THERE IN 774

THE chamberlain Afiarta managed to arrange that the Papal election should proceed rapidly and without any disturbance, but failed to ensure the choice of a Pope suited to his designs. In fact, Adrian I. (772–95), the new occupant of the Chair, was a man of sincere religious faith and most resolute character, who, unlike his predecessor, never hesitated about anything. In fact, when the ambassadors of Desiderius appeared before him making the usual lavish promises in their master's name, he replied that it was impossible to believe in a king who had constantly deceived the late Pope. Nevertheless, as they continued to urge their professions, and Adrian did not wish to fail in ordinary courtesy and expediency, he dispatched Stephen the Notary and Paul Afiarta on an embassy to Pavia. But on reaching Perugia, their journey was arrested by the news that Desiderius had already changed his mind, and that having taken possession of Faenza, Ferrara, and Comacchio, his troops were freely scouring the Exarchate and actually threatening Ravenna,

whence the Archbishop was appealing to the Pope for help. Meanwhile, Carloman's widow had sought refuge with her children at the Court of Desiderius, who, from hatred to Charles, had taken her under his protection, and prayed the Pope to do the same and even bestow consecration on her sons. But Adrian "showed himself as hard as adamant," and actually sent a second embassy to Pavia to heap fresh reproofs on the Longobard monarch and investigate his intentions more thoroughly.

During the course of these events, Afiarta, having realised the depth of the Pope's aversion for himself and the Longobards, attempted to come to terms with Desiderius. The latter was anxious to obtain an interview with Adrian, hoping by fresh wiles to bend him to his own uses; accordingly Afiarta had promised to bring the Pope to him, "even were it necessary to drag him there with a rope round his throat." However, he had reckoned without his host, for he had barely reached Ravenna before he was seized by hirelings of the Archbishop of Ravenna in pursuance of a special order from the Pope. For Adrian, being determined to put an end to the insolent despotism wielded by Paul Afiarta had recalled nearly all the men the latter had sent into banishment, and released those who had been thrown into prison. He likewise ordered a careful investigation as to the disappearance of Sergius. It was then discovered that a week after the death of Pope Stephen, the Chamberlain and others had caused the miserable captive to be brought secretly by night to the Esquiline Hill, where they had murdered and buried him near the Arch of Gallienus. In fact, when the corpse was exhumed it still showed traces of injuries inflicted, and had a halter round its neck. When the crime was discovered some of the accomplices escaped punishment by flight, and others were exiled. Documentary reports of the trial were

forwarded to Ravenna, in order that Afiarta might be brought to judgment and, if guilty, sentenced to the same punishment. But the Archbishop being a warm adherent of the Franks, and consequently still more devoted to the Pope as the opponent of Afiarta and the Longobards, caused the Chamberlain to be condemned to death, and promptly had him executed. The Pope was much vexed by this; for, being sure of his own strength of purpose, he wished to avoid all appearance of excessive rigour.

In any case, the Longobard faction in Rome was thoroughly disheartened and broken up by the loss of its leader, the Chamberlain. Desiderius hurled fierce threats at the Pope on the latter's refusal to make terms with him, and shortly afterwards occupied the Exarchate, invaded the Pentapolis, and between the end of 772 and the first weeks of 773 was already nearing the frontier of the Roman Duchy. But Adrian was already on the alert, and quickly prepared for defence by gathering troops from the Campagna, the provinces, and the towns. About the same time he wrote to implore the aid of King Charles, who was also pressed to make a descent into Italy by certain Longobard chiefs who were hostile to Desiderius. Very soon, in fact, a Frankish embassy arrived in Rome to announce that Charles had decided to pass the Alps. Accordingly, when Desiderius entered Viterbo, envoys came to him from the exultant Pope, commanding him to withdraw under penalty of Anathema. And learning that the Franks were really on the march, the Longobard king beat a retreat. Following the method King Pippin had employed with Aistulf before deciding the question by force of arms, Charles likewise offered peaceful terms to Desiderius, undertaking to give him 14,000 gold *solidi* if he restored the promised territories to the Pope. But no agreement could be arranged. Accordingly, in the spring of 773, the Franks

again marched into Italy with two separate armies. The one commanded by Bernard, the son of Charles Martel and uncle of King Charles, crossed by Mons Jovis (now the Great St. Bernard). The other advanced by the Mont Cenis, and was led by the King in person, who, on reaching the Chiusa of San Michele, once more tried to bring Desiderius to terms by gentle means. But the attempt failed, and he was forced to give battle. The real history of this episode is so intermixed with legendary accounts that it is not easy to disentangle fact from fiction. It is related that the pass over the Alps was so firmly barricaded by a strong wall which the Longobards had built as a defence, that the Franks were seized with dismay and on the point of retreating, when, by the will of God, the enemy suddenly fled in a wild panic. Another legend relates that their flight was caused by the treachery of certain Longobard leaders. A third version has it that when King Charles found the road hopelessly blocked, a Longobard minstrel sought his presence and offered to reveal a secret track by which the army could pass unseen. Thus the Franks made their way down into the valley, and surprising their foes in the rear, thoroughly routed them. Then when the minstrel was asked to name his reward he climbed to the top of a hill and, sounding his horn, asked that all the land should be his where his blast was heard. And the boon was granted. Leaving these and other traditions aside, all we can say is that a battle took place between the Franks and Longobards, that it was won by the Franks, and that no details of it are known. It would appear that while King Charles was making a frontal attack on the Longobards, Bernard's army had rapidly advanced by an unexpected route, and outflanking them took them in the rear and drove them to precipitous flight. Desiderius then sought safety within the walls of Pavia, while Adelchis, his son, shut

himself up in Verona, where Carloman's widow, Gerberga, had already taken refuge with her children.

Charles quickly pushed forward with his army, occupying various important towns, including Turin and Milan. He next besieged Pavia, which was able to hold out for a long time. The object of the war was no longer confined, as in Pippin's day, to obtaining the restitution of Church territory. Charles had no intention of coming to terms with the foe, but was determined to wage a war of extermination, to annihilate the power of the Longobards, and seize the whole of their kingdom. Foreseeing that the regularly conducted siege of Pavia would drag on for some time, he caused his wife Hildegard to come to him from France, made various expeditions in different directions, and occupied several cities, which surrendered without a blow. Verona was one of these cities; so Gerberga and her children fell into his hands, and ended their days in a convent. But Adelchis contrived to make his escape, and after tarrying some time at Salerno, went off to Constantinople.

When six months had elapsed without any sign of the siege of Pavia being brought to an end, Charles decided to go on to Rome that year (774) and gratify the desire, common to all believers at the time, of celebrating Easter, which fell on the 2nd of April, in the capital of the Christian world. The King would likewise find his opportunity in Rome of consulting with the Pope on all the great political questions which were bound to arise from the present war. For instance, when he should have conquered the Longobard kingdom, what was he to do with it? Decidedly, it must not be restored to the Empire, for Adrian I. would be opposed to that measure, nor had he come to Italy for any such purpose. Yet he had no desire to hand it all over to the Church, nor could the Pope be in a position to rule it, having no

standing army. On the other hand, to keep the whole kingdom for himself would be a betrayal of his pledges to the Pope, with whom he wished to live in harmony; for whose sake and in whose cause he had descended into Italy and undertaken the war. Therefore it was necessary to concert measures with the Pope, and for this reason also no better moment could be chosen for his journey to Rome.

What had been the long-cherished aim of the Popes, and the aim still more warmly cherished by Adrian now that the Longobard kingdom was nearing its fall, is sufficiently well explained in their letters and by the so-called Donation of Constantine, which, although known to be a forged document, compiled precisely at this time by some member of the Curia, is of high historical value, in that it clearly betrays the ambitious aims which the Church had steadily kept in view for a long period. This Donation which now sprung upon the world, and was very soon quoted by the Popes as an authentic document, set forth how the Emperor, after conferring the Palace of the Lateran on the Pope, together with the highest honours of the Empire, after formally acknowledging the supremacy of the Church, and recognising the Senatorial rank of prelates and cardinals, made cession of "the city of Rome, of all the places, provinces, and cities of Italy to the most blessed Pope Sylvester and his successors." However vague and fantastic these concessions may seem to be, they most clearly show that the Popes aspired to take the position in Italy that the Empire was obliged to resign; and the evidence of facts proves that Adrian I. was no longer satisfied with the sole acquisition of those territories which had been taken from the Empire by Pippin. At this very moment the men of Spoleto—in order to escape becoming subject to King Charles—had come to Rome to make act of submission to the Pope by

swearing allegiance to him, and in sign thereof—according to the custom of the time—had cut their hair and shaven off their beards. The Pope had willingly accepted their homage, and, as though already their lawful over-lord, had formally recognised the new Duke they had chosen. Osimo, Fermo, Ancona, and Città di Castello, all followed the example of Spoleto. Nevertheless, that Pope Adrian seriously thought of being able to succeed to the imperial power in Italy and to the Longobard kingdom can scarcely be believed. Surely he must have understood that even if given possession of the whole peninsula, he would not have been able to rule it? Accordingly, the idea that presented itself to Charles as more practical and less difficult to carry into execution, was that of forming a Frankish realm in Lombardy and Liguria, ceding the Exarchate and Pentapolis to the Pope, in addition to the Roman Duchy, and likewise handing over to him in other parts of Italy all lands and properties over which the Church could prove to have had genuine patrimonial rights. This plan, however, had not yet assumed a very definite shape in any one's mind; all was still uncertain and open to discussion, and therefore might be satisfactorily mooted in Rome.

Near the Lake of Bracciano, at thirty miles from the city, Charles was met by the first dignitaries sent to welcome him by the Pope. Then, at one mile from the gates the trained militia, or *Scholæ*, students with olive-branches, and a multitude of people singing hymns and bearing huge crosses, came out to greet him with all the ceremony formerly employed in receiving the Exarch. The moment Charles saw them advancing he sprang from his horse and accompanied them on foot to St. Peter's. That ancient church, traditionally supposed to have been erected by Constantine, was very different from and more beautiful than the present cathedral, owing

to the truly original character of its architecture. It stood outside the walls, for in those days the Vatican quarter formed a species of suburb to the city. It was a vast cruciform Basilica with five naves, and the central one terminated in a semicircular apse. The façade opened on a spacious, cloistered courtyard, that was called St. Peter's Paradise. The floor of both the church and the court was raised a good many feet above the level of the outer square. It was approached by a flight of steps of the same width as the façade or outer wall. The ninety-six columns of the church, as well as the bricks of which the walls and arches were built, had been taken from Nero's amphitheatre close by, and from other pagan edifices ; so that there were carvings, capitals, and pillars of many different styles. This huge Christian fane, composed of fragments of heathen temples, seemed to flash light from afar, for the roof was covered with plates of gilded bronze, also appropriated from the shrines of Rome's ancient gods. The richly-coloured mosaics and paintings in the interior gave this church a curiously severe and solemn character, far more in harmony with religious feeling than the modern St. Peter's, which rather resembles an immense art-gallery. There were also many statues of marble and bronze, some of which had been likewise taken from pagan temples and adapted to Christian uses. There were other decorations of rich brocades, embroidered stuffs, and sheets of silver and gold. In the centre of the transept stood the Apostle's "Confession," overlaid with plates of silver, and canopied by a miniature dome supported on six twisted columns of onyx, wherein a hundred lamps and candles perpetually blazed. Every day the building was thronged with thousands of believers of either sex, of all ages and degrees, who flocked from all parts of the earth to seek remission for their sins. It was a unique house of prayer,

and could be truly named the religious centre of the universe.

The Pope, who had been awaiting the arrival of the King since early morning, received him at St. Peter's, standing erect among his clergy at the head of the stairs fronting the entrances, and on beholding him there Charles knelt down at the foot of the flight, and mounting it on his knees kissed every step in turn. As he reached the entrance the Pope saluted him with a kiss, and, taking his hand, led him across the court and up the nave to the "Confession." Thereupon priests and choir chanted the verse, "Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord." That same day, Holy Saturday, the 1st of April, Pope and King, attended by Frankish and Roman nobles, descended to the tomb of St. Peter in the "Confession," and made oath of reciprocal fidelity. The ceremony concluded, they went to St. John Lateran, where the King witnessed the performance of the baptismal rite by the Pope. The next day being Easter Sunday, Charles attended the Pope's High Mass in St. Maria Maggiore. On the third day and first Easter holiday a great banquet was held, and on Tuesday, the fourth morning, a service was celebrated in St. Peter's, and praises of the King were intermixed with those of the Saint. On the fifth day there was a function in St. Paul's.

But the sixth day of the royal visit, the 6th of April and fourth Easter festival, was the most important of all. The Pope marched from the city in solemn procession, and again escorted Charles to St. Peter's, earnestly exhorting him to thoroughly fulfil all the promises originally made by King Pippin and confirmed by himself. Then, according to the "Liber Pontificalis," which is almost our sole authority on this point, Charles had the text read aloud to him of the Donation made by Pippin at

Quierzy, and then the Act was solemnly renewed and ratified by himself and his nobles. Afterwards he ordered it to be transcribed by his chaplain and notary, again pledging his word to cede the territories specified therein, and even causing their boundaries to be more precisely indicated, as given in the account from which we quote. This now vanished Act of Donation, after being signed by the King, his bishops, abbots, dukes, and counts, was placed on the altar at St. Peter's, then deposited for a while in the Holy Confession, and finally handed over to the Pope, with a sworn promise of observing its terms. A second copy, written by the same notary, Etherius, was, for greater security, solemnly deposited in the "Confession" on the body of St. Peter, and under the Gospels which believers kissed, while a third copy was retained by the King. This narrative is taken from the biography of Adrian I. in the "Liber Pontificalis," and the author of the work states that he had seen the Act of Donation with his own eyes. Nevertheless, there has been endless controversy regarding the very existence of the Act, and the whole narrative of the circumstances has been the subject of countless disputes, given rise to a whole library of controversies, and caused charges of forgery, interpolation, and so on, to be freely bandied about. But the final result of the prolonged contest has been that, nowadays, the author of Adrian's Life is believed to have told the truth, the points still disputed mainly bearing on the interpretation of his text.

Therefore, according to the author of the "Liber Pontificalis," the Act of Donation bestowed the Exarchate on the Pope, with all the additional territory formerly comprised within its boundaries. No direct mention was made of the Pentapolis, but there is reason to believe that it was held to be included in the gift; while the Duchies of Spoleto and Benevento, the whole of Tuscany, Corsica, Venetia,

and Istria were specifically added to it. Thus the new kingdom that Charles proposed to keep for himself would have been reduced to very narrow limits in Northern Italy, while the Pope would have been master of nearly all Central and Southern Italy, and also of a portion of the Northern Provinces. But it cannot be denied that, excepting in the case of the Roman Duchy, the Exarchates and Pentapolis, the boundaries of all other territories ceded to the Pope were very loosely determined. So we are driven to conclude that either it was intended to refer solely to patrimonial estates claimed by the Church in other provinces, and to which her right could be proved on documentary evidence, or that even were it then intended to allow the Church absolute sovereignty over them, the pledges to that effect were certainly disregarded. This may have occurred, without any change of purpose or wilful deceit on the King's part, but solely because he became speedily convinced of the Pope's inability to defend even the territories already ceded to him. At any rate, it would have been extremely difficult for Charles, whatever he may have wished, to decide in 774 precisely how much land he would be enabled to give to the Pope. On the one hand, Adrian's pretensions were daily increasing ; and on the other, it was a question of ceding territory which had still to be conquered. The state of uncertainty that naturally ensued opened the door to prolonged discussions, which could only be decided by the final result of the war.

After a flying visit to Rome, at the end of May or beginning of June, King Charles went back to Pavia, which was now forced to surrender, after holding out for nearly eight months. At this point the web of history is again interwoven with legendary tales. It is said that a daughter of Desiderius, being enamoured of Charles, managed to send him a letter by shooting it across the Ticino, tied to

some projectile, and that the reply she received from the King served to greatly intensify her passion. So she secretly gained possession of the keys of the city, which were always hung by her father's bedside, and opened the gates to the besiegers one night. But in hurrying forth to meet King Charles she was thrown down and trampled to death by the Frankish cavalry in their headlong advance. We may glean from this fable that internal dissension, as well as hunger and disease, forced the Longobards to surrender their besieged capital. King Desiderius was carried off to France with his wife and daughter, and ended his days there as a humble monk. The valiant Adelchis had already escaped to Constantinople after the fall of Verona, an event that, according to some writers, was subsequent to that of Pavia. The other Longobard cities of Northern and Central Italy all yielded in turn. Accordingly, it may be said that the fall of Pavia caused the overthrow of the Longobard kingdom, which had lasted for more than two hundred years.

## CHAPTER VII

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE FRANKISH KINGDOM IN ITALY —CONSPIRACIES AND REVOLTS AGAINST THE POPE WHO APPLIES TO CHARLES FOR HELP—THE KING OF THE FRANKS RETURNS TO ITALY AND CELEBRATES THE EASTER OF 781 IN ROME

CHARLES was scarcely thirty-two years of age and, having secured his vast kingdom and still vaster extent of conquered territory from attack on every side, now assumed the titles of King of the Franks, King of the Longobards, and Roman Patrician. In all public documents his Chancery began to reckon the years of his reign from the capture of Pavia, and the same plan was adopted even by private individuals, while the name of the Emperor of the East was left utterly unrecorded. The new Frankish realm in Upper Italy extended beyond the Isonzo to Istria ; but the supremacy of Charles virtually extended over the whole of Central Italy.

After swearing fealty to the Pope, the Dukedom of Spoleto renounced its allegiance and made submission to Charles. But Arichis, the Duke of Benevento, still continued to play the part of an independent sovereign ; while the Duke of Friuli had very reluctantly sworn submission and was preparing to revolt at the first opportunity. In any case, Charles' new title of Roman Patrician was no longer an honorary one, and began to

assume a definite value, in that the King was now the real protector and defender of the Church. In fact, even the provinces more explicitly appertaining to the Church hastened to swear fealty to Charles. Apparently he had reserved the right of final decision in all death sentences, and abolished the right of appeal to ecclesiastical courts; since, on more than one occasion, Charles is found taking his seat *pro tribunali* and pronouncing judgment even in the city of Rome. But he showed great tact by never assuming the title of King of Italy, only styling himself King of the Longobards; and also by refusing to incorporate with France the portion of Italy subject to his sway. For he erected his Italian dominions into a separate province that almost attained to the condition of a self-governing kingdom, inasmuch as he left all old institutions and even old dukedoms intact; merely substituting in certain places a count for a duke. But he speedily organised a new method of administration at Pavia, by appropriating to his own use all the Longobard Crown lands, and giving part of them to certain French convents, a measure that might be styled a preliminary to assimilation.

All of a sudden King Charles was summoned across the Alps in order to put down a revolt of the Saxons, whom he routed in a pitched battle during the year 775, after which he returned to Italy, as we shall shortly see, in order to reduce the Duke of Friuli to submission, but was again called over the mountains to resume the Saxon war, which seemed likely to go on indefinitely. But, although both Saxons and Alamanni kept up a very protracted and most stubborn resistance, both, being of more homogeneous stock, finally assimilated with the Franks. This could never be the case with the Italians, although they opposed a much feebler resistance and were more easily ruled. Having lived together for two cen-

turies, Longobards and Romans had been welded into one nation ; hence both races showed a general and persistent repugnance for the Franks, while among the ruling class in general and the Dukes in particular this aversion was most strongly marked. The same antipathy prevailed in the regions still held by the Byzantines, who, being greatly enraged by the losses they had suffered at the hands of the Franks, did their utmost to incite the whole mass of the people to hate them in an equal degree. All this produced serious disturbances, which unavoidably led to other troubles of a different but no less serious kind.

We have already had occasion to see that the Archbishops of Ravenna frequently started many quarrels and conflicts with Rome ; and these burst out again with increased fury during the present state of public disorder. The Archbishop Leo had obtained his high office in 771, having crushed his rival competitor by the aid of King Charles and the partiality of the Pope, to whom he then professed submission. Now, however, as the times had changed, he began to oppose the will of the Head of the Church. For Ravenna having ceased to be subject to Byzantine rule, Leo considered that the Archbishop was entitled to exercise no less authority in his own diocese than the Pope assumed in Rome. He founded his argument not only on the exceptional position always enjoyed by the episcopal centre of the Exarchate, but likewise on the Pragmatic Sanction, whereby bishops were entitled to appoint judges with full executive powers. Had not Adrian I. appealed to him when Paulus Afiarta was to be tried ? and had not he, Leo, caused the death sentence to be executed without even consulting the Pope ?

The prerogatives conferred on bishops by the Emperor could not be impaired by the Donation made

by Charles to the Bishop of Rome ; neither could they be cancelled by the authority invested in the King as Patrician of Rome. The changes which had ensued had been made in the name of the Roman people, which could not be held superior to that of the Emperor. This would appear to have been Archbishop Leo's line of reasoning ; and it may be undoubtedly affirmed that his conduct was guided by these ideas. Therefore he sought to assume (and from identical motives) the same position in the Exarchate and Pentapolis that had been assumed by the Pope in the territories evacuated by the Empire. Leo certainly encountered strong opposition in the Pentapolis, which declared in favour of the Pope ; but within the boundaries of the Exarchate he successfully appointed officials of his own nomination and ousted those sent from Rome. The Archbishop had had the shrewdness to show great aversion to the Longobards and great friendliness for the Franks, so naturally Charles could not be hostile to him. In fact, this state of things was of service to the King by imposing some little check on the Pope's ever-growing ambition.

Adrian I. was naturally much angered by all this, and complained to Charles about it, urging him to come back to Italy, re-establish the power of the Church there, and fulfil his former promises. In reciting his grievances, he told him of a plot against the Franks that had been hatched in Italy in concert with Constantinople. He considerably exaggerated whatever indirect share might have been taken in it by the Archbishop of Ravenna, who, as we have already noted, was a declared friend of the Franks, and he likewise exaggerated the complicity of the Dukes of Benevento and Spoleto, who were again alienated from him. Adrian stated, among other things, that a letter from the Patriarch of Grado, informing him of the conspiracy, had reached his hands with broken seals,

because the Archbishop had opened it in order to betray its contents to the Dukes—his accomplices. The fact was that several Longobard Dukes were really hatching a plot against the Franks and the Pope. It was alleged by some that Hrodgard, the Duke of Friuli, coveted Desiderius's crown, and by others that the Longobards wished to renew the interregnum that had formerly occurred after the murder of King Cleph. It was also added that a fleet, commanded by Adelchis, had already sailed from Constantinople to secure the success of the scheme. It is quite possible that Archbishop Leo should favour a plot against the Pope, with whom he was at strife; but it is incredible that he should have co-operated in any attempt to drive out his friends the Franks, or reconstitute the Longobard rule, to which he was openly opposed. Nevertheless, it appears certain that a meeting had been held at Spoleto for the purpose of arranging the very plot of which the Pope gave so high-coloured a version to King Charles.

But that monarch took the matter very calmly, and tried, first of all, to detach the Dukes of Spoleto and Benevento from their fellow-conspirators by promising them a larger measure of independence. In addition to this, the news received in Italy in February, 776, of the death of Emperor Copronymos deprived the conspirators of the chief support upon which they relied. Meanwhile Charles, being free from the cares of the Saxon war, marched a small force towards Italy, arrived there with lightning speed, attacked Hrodgard only, quickly defeated him in battle, and apparently killed him. Thus the King became master of Friuli, for, though some resistance was offered at Treviso, it was so easily disposed of that he celebrated the Easter Festival (April 14, 776) in that city. On his first descent into Italy he had shown remarkable leniency. Now, however, being greatly

angered by the plot against him, he was sternly severe. Many persons were reduced to poverty by the confiscation of their lands, and even those who escaped imprisonment became homeless wanderers. One of the men thrown into prison was a brother of the historian Paulus Diaconus. So the latter, after having recorded the generous acts of the King on first coming to Italy, was now driven to lament the cruel and prolonged captivity of his own brother, whose wife and children were stripped of their all and went about in rags begging their daily bread. Charles now proceeded to effect, on a larger scale than before, the substitution of counts in place of dukes as rulers of Italian cities. The former, being less powerful than the latter, were in greater subordination to himself, their over-lord, and consequently more obedient to his commands. For the better defence of the kingdom, he had adopted the plan of establishing Marches on the borders, each March consisting of several counties, which he entrusted to "Counts of the Marches," who were therefore quite as powerful as dukes, and he now employed the same method in Friuli. After this, being obliged to continue the Saxon war, he quitted Italy without visiting the Pope, towards whom his friendship seemed to have cooled, while, on the other hand, he showed some, at least, apparent favour to the Archbishop of Ravenna. Having conquered the Saxons in spite of their fierce resistance, Charles was next compelled to hasten to Spain, and, passing the Pyrenees, made war on the Saracens, captured Pampeluna, and pushed on to Saragossa. But then he was forced to hurry back again in order to quell another revolt in Saxony. On the march from Spain, his rear-guard was hotly attacked by the Basques, and literally annihilated in the famous rout at Roncesvalle (778), in which the best part of the Frankish Paladins were killed, including the mighty Orlando,

whose valour is so highly vaunted in poems of chivalry. Nevertheless, Charles pursued his retreat to his own country, and after again crushing the Saxons in 779, crossed the Alps for the third time, as the state of things in Italy imperatively demanded his presence.

The Archbishop of Ravenna was no longer living, but the opposition to the Pope had not ceased altogether, for the Dukes of Spoleto and Benevento showed increasing hostility to him. These two potentates gave encouragement to all his foes and to every place that rose in rebellion against him, as in the case of the revolt of Terracina, which following Gaeta's example, had now declared for the Byzantines. The Pope addressed bitter lamentations about this to the King, imploring him to come to his aid. Now, too, for the first time he officially alluded to Constantine's Donation to Pope Sylvester. However, in specifying what dominions were claimed for the Church, his demands were quite modest compared with the extent of territory indicated in the Act of Donation. For he only alluded to certain *patrimonies* of St. Peter in Tuscany, Spoleto, Benevento, Corsica, and the Sabine territory, all which patrimonies had been usurped by the Longobards, but belonged to the Church in virtue of former donations granted by emperors, exarchs, and others for the good of their souls, as could be proved by documents in his possession. Accordingly, it would seem that, apart from the Roman Duchy, Exarchates, and Pentapolis, his demands were limited, at least for the moment, to certain estates in various parts of the country. Hence, the "Liber Pontificalis" must have exaggerated the case in some way by the looseness of its wording, and have mistaken rights of ownership over certain tracts of land for rights of sovereignty over the provinces in which they were situated.

The Pope now applied to Charles, as to his legitimate sovereign, asking him to grant what in his opinion really

appertained to the Church and at the same time making protest against the calumnies hurled at him by his enemies, touching the corruption of the clergy, and also regarding the slave trade, which they accused him of favouring, whereas he had condemned and tried to abolish it. As an even more notable proof of the supremacy still attributed to the King by the Pope, we find the latter craving the royal permission to fell trees in the Spoleto forests, to provide the timber required for repairing the roof of St. Peter's Church. This affords satisfactory evidence that Adrian was very far from claiming to be the master of nearly all Central and Southern Italy, as alleged in the "Liber Pontificalis."

At the close of 780, Charles spent Christmas at Pavia with his wife Hildegard and his sons Carloman and Ludovic. Although on this occasion he came to Italy without an army, his visit led to important results, owing to the laws and chapters he then caused to be published in order to establish the government of the country on a settled basis. Certain of these laws, already proclaimed in France, now received sanction in Italy; while others were specifically planned for Italian use, and nearly all were to the advantage of the Church. Charles endowed the Church with the power of collecting tithes, augmented her revenues, tried to regulate the payment of canons due to her, to define the authority of metropolitan bishops, and to secure the proper administration of justice in the courts.

Naturally, all these measures were taken with the full agreement and approbation of the Pope, and when the King came to Rome for Easter (April 15, 781) he caused his son Carloman to be re-baptized by him and his name changed to that of Pippin. Accordingly from that time forth, Adrian always addressed Charles in his letters by the title of *compater noster*. On that same Easter Day, the Pope anointed Pippin as King of Italy, and Ludovic as King of Aquitaine, although merely as a matter of form

seeing that the elder boy was barely four and the other only two years of age.

These events undoubtedly enhanced in no small degree the authority of the Head of the Church, who now appeared increasingly disposed to assume the right of making and unmaking kingdoms. But, even in Italy, the real supremacy remained vested in King Charles, seeing that all the public documents of the realm were now issued by the Frankish Chancery and signed by Charles alone.

# CHAPTER VIII

IRENE RULES AT CONSTANTINOPLE—CHARLES INFLICTS FRESH DEFEATS ON THE SAXONS—ON RETURNING TO ITALY HE SUBJECTS FRIULI AND BENEVENTO—HE MAKES WAR ON THE AVARS—THEOLOGICAL DISPUTES—DEATH OF ADRIAN I. AND DESCRIPTION OF HIS CHARACTER

EVERYTHING now seemed to turn to Charles's advantage. In Byzantium, Constantine Copronymos had been succeeded by Leo IV., the Iconoclast, at whose death in 786 his widow, Irene, came to the throne, and was crowned together with her son, Constantine VI., a boy of only ten years. Irene was favourable to the worship of images, and feeling the need of establishing her position as empress, quickly declared her adherence to the Roman Church, and sent ambassadors to Charles proposing an alliance between her son Constantine and the King's eldest daughter Hrotrud, a child of eight. Thus there seemed reason to hope that, not only would there be peace between Constantinople and the Franks, but that no obstacle would be raised to the free possession granted to the Church of the Exarchate, Pentapolis and other territories, over which she could prove her legal rights. Only, at the very moment that a satisfactory arrangement seemed on the point of conclusion, Charles was obliged to set off in haste to resume his endless war with the Saxons, who had again risen in desperate revolt. He quickly defeated

and severely chastised them, for he is said to have condemned to death as many as 4,500 rebels in a single day. But, instead of reducing them to subjection, this drastic measure only roused a fiercer rebellion. In 783, the year in which he lost within a short space both his wife and his mother, he had to undertake another campaign against this stubborn tribe, and again won a great victory over them. Leaving the battlefield covered with heaps of slain, he went back to his kingdom laden with booty, and after his mother and his wife had been consigned to their graves, soon chose a new bride, named Fastrada. During the summer of 785 he again routed the Saxons in the field, and this time to some real effect. For the celebrated chief, Witikind, who had always been their leader, submitted to Charles and became a convert to Catholicism, an event that conduced to the subjection and conversion of the whole people. But in order to obtain this result Charles had been obliged to march eleven armies in succession to combat the proud tribe, and nine of these campaigns had been led by him in person.

Although Italian affairs had steadily improved during this period, and invariably to the advantage of the Papacy, owing to the manifest favour of those who ruled the Peninsula in the name of Pippin, but really under the supreme authority of King Charles, Adrian I. was still unsatisfied. He rejoiced in the triumphs of the King and the concession of the Saxons, but continually demanded the "just rights" (*giustizie*) of St. Peter with growing persistence, though never specifying the exact nature or amount of those rights; which indeed appeared to be steadily on the increase. Just now he was insisting more particularly on the cession of the Sabine patrimony which, so he alleged, had been always promised but never restored to him. All his letters, from 781 to 783, are full of complaints to that effect. The Pope concluded by stating that

the King had set inquiries on foot to investigate the real state of the matter ; but that after interrogating all the elders of every place, and after all obscurity had been cleared away, nothing more had been done. Adrian was addressing the same demands to the Empress Irene with regard to the lands which the Byzantines had taken from the Church in Calabria, Sicily, and elsewhere. And going on from one point to another, he even ended by proposing a pact of full agreement between the Eastern and Western Churches, " so that there might be no more risk of any fatal rupture, while always speaking of concord and friendship."

At any rate there was no quiet in Italy. The Pope was always complaining of being defrauded of his lands ; while Arichis, Duke of Benevento, who considered himself an independent sovereign, was always threatening his neighbours with a view to the extension of his own State. Accordingly, Charles returned to Italy, and after spending the Christmas of 786 at Florence, moved on towards Rome and advanced in the direction of Benevento. Arichis had flown to arms with the intention of making a stand at Salerno, where succour could easily reach him by sea, but soon came to terms with the King. The Duke made submission to the latter in the same manner in which his predecessors had made submission to the King of the Longobards. He also paid an indemnity, and gave his son Grimwald in hostage. Now, however, relations with Constantinople grew rather strained. In 787 the proposed marriage of Charles's daughter with the Empress's son was broken off, and the following year Constantine took an Armenian bride. Nevertheless, Charles had no time to think of the matter just then, for, after celebrating the Easter of 787 in Rome, he had to hurry back to Germany to war against the Duke of Bavaria, who was finally reduced to subjection that year.

Towards the close of 787 news suddenly came that Adelchis had effected a landing in Calabria. The Pope declared that he had come to the help of Duke Arichis, in order to reduce him to dependence on Constantinople, and then join with him in attacking Ravenna by sea. But whatever design may have been formed it came to nothing, for Arichis and his son Romwald speedily died, and left the government to the widowed Duchess Adalberga, a clever and resolute woman who openly sided with the Franks. First of all she requested King Charles to release her other son Grimwald, whom he still held in hostage. So the youth was restored to her, and at once assumed possession of the Duchy without paying any attention to the Pope, and regardless of the latter's perpetual demands for this or that territory and for the rights and *justices* due to St. Peter. Meanwhile, the Duke was preparing for war against the Byzantines in concert with King Charles, who was still detained in Germany, and had soon to take the field there against the Avars. When the empire of the Avars was destroyed in the days of Heraclius, the remnants of the nation had sought refuge in Pannonia, and now made their final appearance on the stage by pushing down into Friuli for a while.

In 788, Byzantine troops were disembarked on the southern coast of Italy for the purpose of reinforcing Adelchis; so Grimwald of Benevento and his men, and Hildebrand of Spoleto with his followers, and also a small Frankish force sent by Charles, promptly marched against them. The Byzantines were driven back to Sicily; Adelchis withdrew and was never heard of again. All these events helped to raise King Charles's power and prestige in Italy to an extraordinary pitch. But he retained the utmost deference for the Pope in all matters whether great or small. He even appealed to him—almost

as though Adrian were supreme in the Exarchate—for permission to export a few marbles and mosaics from Ravenna for the decoration of some buildings he wished to erect in Aachen and elsewhere.

There seemed to be no limit to the King's marvellous energy; at every moment he was called to face new perils, and promptly surmounted them. In 791, he waged war against the Avars in Germany and Friuli. In 792, he was forced to repress a conspiracy hatched by his natural son Pippin, nicknamed "the Hunchback," who had rebelled in consequence of being excluded from the succession, in favour, as he seemed to think, of the legitimate heir, whose name, as we have seen, had been recently changed to that of Pippin. However, the Hunchback was soon worsted and confined in a monastery. Even Spoleto and Benevento gave a great deal of trouble by their perpetual attempts at rebellion.

A certain incident recorded in a document dated 824 must have occurred in 792, exactly at the time when the Avars were threatening Friuli with invasion. To provide for the defence of Verona it was indispensable to repair the walls, and this led to a hot dispute between the bishop and the citizens, who tried to make him pay one-third of the cost, whereas he maintained that his share should be only one-fourth of the amount. Accordingly, a sort of trial by ordeal was arranged, which resulted in favour of the bishop. Some writers have tried to deduce from this that even as early as the year 792 there was already a commencement of autonomous government in some of the Longobard cities. But the authenticity of the documentary record is extremely doubtful, and there is also some probability that it really referred to events of a later date.

While pursuing his task of promulgating laws and consolidating the government, Charles gave continued

attention to the organisation of the Church, and likewise to the settlement of religious questions. In 794, he convoked a Synod at Frankfort and took an active part in discussing points of dogma. At one of the sittings he condemned the so-called Adoptionist heresy, imported from Spain, which admitted the dual nature of Jesus, declaring that as the Word He was truly the Son of God, but that as Man He was only Son of the Father by grace and adoption. The second question discussed by the Synod was of a different kind, but roused no less heat. The seventh Œcumenical Council of Nicæa (787), in sanctioning the worship of images, had admitted that prayer might be offered to the images of saints, as well as to the Cross, and that tapers and incense might be burnt before them. All this might appear simple enough in the East, where it was customary to burn incense and place lighted candles even in front of the Emperor's portrait, but things were different in the West. The matter became still more serious when, in translating the decrees of the Council at Pope Adrian's command, the words *to honour* the saints were rendered by the very different verb *to adore*. So, rightly enough, after opposing Adoptionism, the King also opposed the pretension of offering the same adoration (*latria*) to the Saints that was only owed to the Trinity. This, however, was merely fighting windmills, inasmuch as the question at Nicæa touched on *honouring*, not on *adoring* the Saints. Accordingly, the Pope, without consenting to condemn (which indeed would have been impossible for him) the recent decrees of the Nicene Council, refrained from giving them his approval. And this, not only on account of the strange manner in which they were formulated, but also by way of expressing his dissatisfaction with Constantinople, where no willingness was shown to restore the territories which he alleged to have

been robbed from the Church in Southern Italy. He seemed pleased on the whole with the results achieved at Frankfort.

On the 10th of August of the same year (794) King Charles was bereaved of his wife Fastrada, and immediately after her death was again compelled to resume the Saxon war, which was vigorously prosecuted in 795.

Pope Adrian I. died on Christmas Day (795). Many important events had occurred during his reign, though they were not invariably owed to his initiative. It is true that he summoned King Charles to Italy, and that Charles destroyed the Longobard rule and started the temporal power of the Papacy; but all this seemed rather the result of circumstances than of any personal effort on the part of the Pope. In his correspondence with the King he always referred to Constantine, "who had made the great Donation, because it was unjust that an earthly emperor should hold sway in the land wherein the heavenly Emperor had established his priestly principality." He was so jealous of his own authority that he expostulated with the King for giving audience to certain inhabitants of the Pentapolis who had gone to seek him without first obtaining the Papal authorisation. "Even as the Franks," he remarked, "never come to Rome without the King's consent, so those men had no right to go to France without the consent of the Pope. For, even as the latter respects the Patriciate of the King, so should the King respect that of St. Peter." Neither would he admit Charles's right to interfere with the affairs of Ravenna, seeing that the Exarchate and the Pentapolis now belonged to St. Peter. But these views were more or less theoretical, since Charles was the real master. In fact, Adrian was enabled to escape many dangers by recognising the true state of things and prudently submitting to necessity, in spite of continually

protesting and making reservations in order to keep intact the rights of the Church. His successor, who was of more uncompromising temper and had rather less respect for appearances, was soon brought, as we shall see to sad straits.

# CHAPTER IX

ELECTION OF LEO III.—A FRANKISH EMBASSY TO ROME—
—THE EMPRESS IRENE—THE POPE AT PADERBORN
—HIS RETURN TO ROME—CHARLES COMES TO ROME
AND ON CHRISTMAS DAY, 800, IS CROWNED
EMPEROR BY THE POPE

Leo III. was elected Pope the day after Adrian's death and received consecration on the 27th of December, 795. In 772, his predecessor still dated his pontifical bulls reckoning from the number of years the Emperor had held sway, but after King Charles became over-lord of Italy, began to count them from the years of his own reign, although still acknowledging the Emperor's supremacy. But Leo III. at once dated his bulls according to the years Charles had reigned as King of the Franks and the Longobards and as Patrician of Rome, after his conquest of Italy. Thus the bond was snapped between the Church and Constantinople, from which the new Pope virtually asserted his independence. Leo's first act was to announce his predecessor's death and his own election to Charles, forwarding at the same time the golden keys of St. Peter and the banner of the city of Rome as a token that he unhesitatingly recognised the monarch's supremacy as Patrician. He likewise invited him to despatch envoys to Rome to receive the people's oath of allegiance.

The ideas of Leo III. regarding the new state of affairs are clearly indicated in the celebrated mosaic he caused to be placed in the triclinium of the Lateran. It has now disappeared, but a reproduction made in 1743 from an old drawing is still to be seen on the outer wall of the "Scala Santa" in the Piazza of the Gate of St. John Lateran, near the Basilica. The figures in this mosaic seem to direct their gaze across the Campagna to the olive groves of Tivoli and beyond them, to the Sabine and Umbrian peaks whose delicate tints are often hidden in winter beneath a veil of snow. The mosaic is divided into three compartments. The central and larger one is filled by the majestic form of the Redeemer surrounded by the apostles, whom He is sending forth to proclaim His gospel to the world. One hand is extended in the act of benediction, the other clasps a book inscribed with the words *Pax vobis.* In the compartment to the right, Christ is seated between Pope Sylvester and the Emperor Constantine, who are depicted as much smaller figures kneeling on either side. The left division contains a great figure of St. Peter with the keys in his lap, flanked by the kneeling forms of Leo III. and King Charles, also of lesser size. St. Peter is presenting a stole to the Pope and the banner of Rome to the King. The legend beneath runs: "*Beate Petre donas vita Leoni P.P. et bictoria Carulo Regio donas.*"

In response to the embassy from Rome, Charles sent ambassadors of his own there, headed by the Abbot Angilbert, who was surnamed Homer on account of his great learning and love of poetry. His instructions were very simple. He was to remind the Pope of the necessity of "observing a holy life and enforcing respect of holy rules." The King likewise wrote to Adrian himself, stating "that Angilbert comes to confer with you on all measures you may deem necessary for the glory of God

and Holy Church, and for the maintenance of your honour and our Patriciate. We wish to conclude the same terms of alliance with you as were previously concluded with your predecessor, and crave your blessing. It behoveth us, with God's help, to defend the Church abroad by force of arms against all pagans and infidels, and protect her at home by the maintenance of the Catholic faith. It behoveth you, holy father, to assist our soldiers, by raising, like Moses, your hands to heaven, so that the Christian people may prevail over the enemies of Christ." This shows that Charles not only assumed the attitude of protector of the Pope, but also that of champion of the true faith. His warning as to the duty of leading a holy life, proves that intelligence had reached him of the numerous and weighty accusations launched in Rome against the Pope by his enemies and slanderers.

Meanwhile all things continued to prosper with the King, and his own courage and that of his followers mounted with the tide of good fortune. His learned adviser, Alcuin, continually reminded him that he was appointed by God not only to be the mightiest sovereign in the world, but also the defender of the true faith. Now, there was nothing to be feared from the Empire of the East, which had sunk to so low a depth that no man could speak of it without blushing. No danger, no opposition to the preponderating power of Charles could be threatened from the East. Irene had begun to reign in association with her son Constantine VI., not only keeping him in humiliating subjection, but actually flogging him. At last he threw off the yoke, excluding his mother from the government and placing her in confinement. But he was so weak, dissolute, capricious, and violent, that in 797 a revolution broke out and Irene was restored to the throne. Thereupon she not only deposed her son but treated him with savage cruelty, and had his eyes plucked out in the

hope of causing his death. As a matter of fact he lingered in captivity for many years neglected by all. Accordingly, for the first time in history, a woman reigned in the East, a novelty that appeared all the more enormous seeing that this woman was known to be a monster by the atrocities she had perpetrated on her own son.

Matters went little better in Rome, where the weakness of the Empire and the absence of King Charles again caused an outbreak of savage party passion. The *judices de clero*, and the *judices de militia* who had held command of the city for some time, rose in revolt. As we already know, the ecclesiastical judges were wealthy prelates, friends or kinsmen of the Popes. From their midst were chosen the seven ministers of the Curia who managed the property of the Church, and their chief was the *Primicerius*, who in all public ceremonies ranked next to the Pope.

Under Adrian I. this office was held by his uncle, Theodatus, who also received the title of *Consul et Dux*, and thus his noble and already powerful house acquired enormous influence in Rome. Two nephews of the Pope, Theodorus and Paschal, had also attained to high power, and the second of the two succeeded Theodatus as Primicerius, and still held that office after Adrian's death, since it was not usual to appoint a new one when a fresh Pope was elected. Hence Paschal, having grown accustomed to playing the master, clashed with Leo III., and naturally detested him. He and Campulus, the *Sacellarius*, or Keeper of the Privy Purse (probably another nephew of the late Pontiff), placed themselves at the head of the *judices de clero* and of the *judices de militia*, who constituted the secular aristocracy, and had command of the army, and made a combined attempt to get the entire government of the city into their own hands.

On the 25th of April, 779, the Feast of St. Mark, when a grand procession was to parade the city singing pious

Litanies, Leo III., with Paschal and Campulus in attendance, and followed by a train of priests, came riding through the street that leads from St. John Lateran to St. Laurence in Lucina. They had barely reached St. Sylvester in Capite when the conspirators rushed forward, sword in hand, and falling on the Pope, stabbed him and dragged him from the saddle. Then in the barbarous Byzantine way, they attempted to blind him and pluck out his tongue, leaving him half dead on the ground Paschal and Campulus, who were privy to the crime, then openly sided with the assassins, first imprisoning the Pope in the neighbouring convent, and then, for greater safety, removing him to St. Erasmus on the Cœlian Hill. Legend declares that he miraculously recovered his eyes and tongue there, but history states that he had never been deprived of them. The conspirators did not venture to elect a new Pope, especially as their plot had not been aimed at the Head of the Church but against the Lord of the City. As Leo III. was soon healed of his wounds, some of his familiars, including the Chamberlain Albinus, contrived his escape by letting him down with ropes from the monastery wall and conveyed him to St. Peter's. There Guinigild, Duke of Spoleto, and his troops, together with an envoy from King Charles, came to his rescue and escorted him to Spoleto. An embassy was quickly dispatched to France to inform the King of what had happened, and state that the Pope desired an interview with him. Charles replied that he would have hastened to the Pope at once were he not prevented by another campaign against the Saxons. He would therefore receive the Pope at Paderborn, and would send Archbishop Hildibald of Cologne, Count Ascarius, and his own son, Pippin, King of Italy, to meet him on the road and escort him in all safety and honour to his presence. So the Pope made a triumphal journey with a numerous

retinue of prelates. The Archbishop was the first to meet him on the road, and then Pippin appeared with a portion of his army and conducted him to Paderborn, where Charles welcomed him in state at the head of his troops, who all knelt to receive the Papal benediction. The King then held great festivities in his honour, and also made him generous donations.

Meanwhile Rome was in full revolt, and the gravest accusations against the Pope were continually forwarded to Charles, praying him to bring Leo to trial, since the crimes attributed to that Pontiff were of so serious a nature that, unless proved innocent, he certainly ought to be deposed. In fact, things looked so ugly, that although absorbed in the business of the war, Charles deemed it necessary to consult his trusty Alcuin as to the advisability of continuing the campaign in person or of going straightforth to Rome in order to put an end to the dangerous disturbances which were still raging there. Alcuin then wrote a very remarkable letter to the King, in which he said : "Down to this time there have been three powers in the world, the Vicar of St. Peter, now impiously insulted and maltreated ; the secular Emperor and ruler of new Rome, who, in equally barbarous fashion, has been dragged from the throne to give place to a woman ; and finally the royal dignity entrusted to yourself by Jesus Christ for the rule of the Christian people. This dignity surpasses all others in wisdom and power ; therefore, the salvation of Christianity depends on you alone. Your first thought should be to cure the Head (*i.e.*, *Rome*), your second to apply remedies to the feet (*i.e.*, *the Saxons and other foes*), whose ills are always less perilous."

Accordingly, on finding that both the Pope and the Romans invoked the exercise of his supreme authority, the King realised the gravity of the situation, and felt

anxious to go to Italy at once. But being unable to leave Paderborn for the present, he allowed Leo III. to start in the company of the Archbishops of Cologne and Salzburg, five bishops and three counts, all of whom were sent, not only to do honour to the Pope, but also for the purpose of undertaking a judicial inquiry regarding all that had happened in Rome, and all the charges brought against Leo III. Meanwhile, as the Head of the Church, and under the protection of the King, and also because a reaction in his favour had already begun, the Pope everywhere received a triumphal welcome. On the 29th of November, 799, he reached Pontemolle, and was met there by the clergy, the nuns, the Senate (that is, the nobility), the Roman army and Roman people, and the foreign scholars, all singing Psalms and bearing banners in their hands. Moving on to St. Peter's, Leo pronounced a blessing on the people and administered the holy sacrament. The following morning he went to the Lateran, and there, a few days later, the royal commissioners opened the trial in the new Triclinum decorated with the great mosaic picture mentioned in a previous page. Paschal, Campulus, and their companions appeared before the tribunal with tranquil assurance; but being unable to prove the truth of the charges they had made, while there was the fullest proof of the bloodthirsty violence of their attack on the Pope, they were seized and sent to Gaul to await their trial before the supreme court of King Charles, who had to defer judgment until he should be able to return to Italy.

He was detained some time longer by wars with the Saxons, the Bretons, and the Moors in Spain. In addition to all these cares, his third and last legitimate wife, Liutgarda, was taken from him by death, on the 4th of June, 800. But in the autumn of 800 he finally made his fourth and most memorable visit to Italy. He

came at the head of an army and accompanied by his son Pippin, whom he sent on from Ancona to attack the Duke of Benevento, who was again threatening revolt. On the 23rd of November he halted at Mentana, fourteen miles distance from Rome, and was met there by Leo III., the clergy, army, and people of Rome. They conferred together and dined, after which the Pope returned to the city. They following day Charles entered St. Peter's in state and was received there by the Pope and the clergy.

On the 1st of December, the King, attended by his bishops, abbots, and barons, took his seat as supreme judge in St. Peter's, where he had convened a great assembly of both the aristocracies and of the priesthood of Rome. Charles was attired in the toga and chlamys of the Patrician of Rome, the Pope was enthroned beside him, and the latter's accusers, who had been brought back from France, were also present. The King then made a speech, saying that he had now come to Rome as Patrician and Defender of the Church, in order to restore public order after the disturbances which had taken place there and the insults and accusations hurled at the Head of the Christian world. The supremacy of Charles was recognised by all ; nevertheless it was very difficult to bring this trial to a conclusion. For although it was impossible to prove the truth of the charges against the Pope, neither was it easy to establish their falsity. Besides, the bishops unanimously declared that it was altogether unlawful for them to sit in judgment on the supreme Head of the Church, who was, on the contrary, bound to judge them. The details of the trial are unknown to us ; we are also unacquainted with the exact nature of the charges alleged. But we know that on the 23rd of December, in the presence of King Charles and his Franks, before all the bishops and clergy, the nobles and citizens of Rome solemnly assembled in St. Peter's, the

Pope, having mounted the pulpit and placed his hand on the Gospels, proclaimed in clear, distinct tones that, following the example of his predecessors (among whom, in fact, he might have cited that of Pelagius, who was accused of complicity in the death of Pope Vigilius)—he, of his own free-will—since no one had power to judge him—affirmed on oath his total innocence of all the crimes laid to his charge. Then the priests chanted hymns of thanksgiving to God and the Virgin Mother. Doubtless Leo was induced to make this public assertion of innocence because it was deemed fitting by the King, whose aid was indispensable for the maintenance of his rule. But his authority was saved with the Church and the people. Paschal, Campulus, and their accomplices were condemned to death, but through the intercession, it was said, of the Pope himself, their sentence was commuted to perpetual banishment in France. On the same day, two representatives of the Patriarch of Jerusalem arrived in Rome and presented Charles with the keys of their city and of the Holy Sepulchre. On Christmas Day, the King attended the Pope's High Mass at St. Peter's, and afterwards prayed with him in the Tomb of the Saint. Then, when Charles rose from his knees, Leo suddenly placed the Imperial crown on his head, and, so it is said, then knelt at his feet in act of adoration. Thereupon, the Roman people acclaimed him Emperor, frantically shouting: "*Carolo piissimo augusto a Deo coronato, magno pacifico Imperatori vita et victoria.*" This coronation opened a new epoch in the history of the world.

The annalist, Einhard, states that it was unexpectedly and spontaneously performed by the Pope, that Charles was taken altogether by surprise, and actually protested that had he foreseen this, he would have refrained from attending the great function at St. Peter's that day. There has been much dispute as to the truth of this assertion. Some

regarded it as a mere invention on the part of the chronicler, others as a fiction on the part of the King in imitation of Tiberius, who feigned to refuse the Empire he so ardently wished to possess. These writers maintain that every detail of the Imperial coronation had been previously arranged while the Pope was at Paderborn, and that it could have been in nowise an unexpected or spontaneous act. At any rate, the crown must have been ordered and made ready beforehand and the solemnity of the function previously arranged, seeing that it was no surprise to the assembled crowd, who understood it at once and burst into noisy and unanimous shouts of applause.

History is rich in analogous instances, serving to show that it is possible to explain the King's utterances without assigning to them any falsity or deceit. Persigny relates in his Memoirs how he "rushed" the proclamation of the Empire almost by force, and against the will of Napoleon III., although the latter had long aspired and struggled to win it. But he did not think the right moment had arrived, whereas Persigny was sure it had come and refused to let it pass. Hence, it may well be that Charles, although undoubtedly coveting the Empire, would have preferred to smooth the way more completely for the proclamation of his new title, and settle all details of the rite in advance; while the Pope, for the express purpose of avoiding acceptance of some unwelcome formula or condition, hastened to clinch the matter by completing the deed. It was of supreme importance to himself that the coronation and proclamation of the Empire should appear to be directly owed to the visible Head of the Church, as the instrument of heaven, and be acclaimed by the Roman people, who represented the universal flock of Christ. Leo III. was resolved to be the initiator and creator of the new Empire, so that all might accrue to the good of religion and to

the ever greater enhancement of the authority of Holy Church.

Naturally, this great event was widely discussed and gave rise to numerous suppositions. According to some writers, Charles was proclaimed Emperor by the Senate and people of Rome ; according to others, he was elected and anointed by the Pope ; while others again averred that he obtained the Empire by conquest. But it was always recognised that the primary cause was the will of God, of whom mankind is the blind instrument. The truth is that the Empire was the result of no theory, but the unavoidable evolution of historic necessity. The Church stood in need of protection and defence ; therefore the Pope had summoned the Franks, and therefore, of his own will and with his own hands, had crowned King Charles in the name of the Lord. After crowning him, however, he had knelt before him. Who, then, was the superior, Emperor or Pope? This question the future alone could decide. For the moment, the Pope had created the Empire whose protection he required. Having separated from Constantinople the Church dwelt in the new Empire ruled by Charles, to whom posterity gave the title of Charles the Great. From that moment, in fact, Charles was the only true ruler, as being the only man with strength to rule.

But an Empire being universal in its nature, there could be only one Empire, that of the East, with Constantinople as its seat. That which was formerly known as the Western Empire was merely an ephemeral episode and already long past and forgotten. In fact, three centuries had elapsed since the ambassadors of Odovacar and Augustulus had placed the Imperial insignia in Zeno's hands, declaring to him that the West needed no Emperor of its own, that the Emperor of the East sufficed for all, and that Italy, the ancient seat of Empire,

was still an integral part of his realm. Accordingly the new Frankish Empire, although the outcome of an historic necessity, had no lawful basis. Perhaps it was also on this score that Charles wished to observe caution as to the moment and manner of his proclamation. Nevertheless, Leo III. had chosen a highly opportune moment. The King of the Franks had then conquered all his foes, and strongly consolidated and enlarged his own realm. The Pope had been pronounced innocent and had remounted St. Peter's Chair, armed with greater authority than before. The day of the Coronation was a holy day to all as the anniversary of our Lord's birth, and, accordingly, of the redemption of mankind. The throne of Constantinople was occupied, as we know, by a woman, and the woman was a monster whom none could respect. Nevertheless, the great event that was now accomplished was pregnant with doubts and dangers, of which the sad consequences were soon to be felt. For the moment, however, the moral power of the Pope was immensely enhanced.

After a residence of five months in Rome, and after celebrating Easter there in April, 801, and delegating to Pippin the task of continuing the campaign against Benevento, Charles went back to Pavia. There he issued a few other laws, supplementary to the Longobard Code, and assumed the title of "The Most Serene Augustus, by divine will crowned ruler of the Roman Empire, and, by grace of God, King of the Franks and the Longobards." He allowed North Italy to retain its autonomy, without annexing that country to the Frankish realm, and rather regarding it as a personal conquest of his own. Doing away with the Dukes, he replaced them by Longobard Counts of his own choice since, as we have already explained, these Counts were less powerful and more submissive than Dukes and ruled smaller territories. The

unity and strength of the government and the fusion of conquerors and conquered then progressed with great strides. The Gastalds, whose original functions were no longer required, now changed into mere agents in the dependence of the Counts, who administered justice only as delegates of the sovereign, and not, like the Dukes, in their own right. The right of calling out the national militia (*heriban*) was reserved to the Emperor alone, who restricted the power of the Dukes to even narrower limits by means of the so-called *Missi dominici* (or high commissioners), who became a royal institution of primary importance among the Franks and by whose means the Emperor was able to keep an eye on the whole scheme of administration. In holding courts of justice Charles decided cases like a true sovereign, and even on a basis of equity where law failed to touch the point at issue. The Longobard Dukes were allowed some power of deciding in this fashion, but it was never conceded to the Frankish Counts.

Charles also gave attention to legal procedure, which among the barbarians long bore traces of its primitive origin. At first every man did justice for himself; next, justice was administered by the people; then, later on, by the Sovereign, representing the State. During the Middle Ages a mixed system prevailed. The people co-operated with the King in the administration of justice, for the King held solemn courts of justice, surrounded by his grandees and his Palatine judges, in the presence of popular assemblies called *placita*, the presidency of which might be delegated, if necessary, to the Counts. The sovereign or his acting delegate was assisted by magistrates, who directed these general assemblies and were thoroughly conversant with the usages to be observed. By slow degrees the people abandoned the practice of regularly attending the *placita*, and then

the written laws which were added to or substituted for the old customs were less easy of interpretation. Accordingly, it became necessary to appoint temporary magistrates skilled in the law and capable of pronouncing verdicts. Charles converted magistrates of this description into permanent officials styled *Scabini*. They were elected by the *placita*, in the presence of the Count, and the *Missi dominici* confirmed their appointment if they considered them suited to the work.

The general organisation of the Frankish government and society was very different from that of the Longobards, and particularly in its greater centralisation and in the wider political, military, and judicial authority of the sovereign. The Franks recognised no distinction between the patrimony of the State and that of the King. *Curtis regia*, *Palatinum publicum*, *Res publica*, seemed to them one and the same thing. State domains, as well as those reverting to the State in the absence of heirs, were alike included in the royal patrimony. The King entrusted the administration of the whole to officers of his own, who enjoyed none of the independence of the Longobard Gastalds; for everywhere and always Charles's strong individuality seemed to augment both his material and moral authority.

This monarch's incessant and feverish activity was shown in a thousand different ways. He was a tall, robust man of handsome presence, with brilliantly flashing eyes. He was valiant, resourceful, and untiring, was not only a captain and statesman of the highest class, but, like most great sovereigns, an energetic promoter of public works. In 793 we find him engaged in studying a scheme for cutting a canal to connect the Rhine with the Danube, a gigantic enterprise quite beyond the engineering skill of his period and that was to be only carried out in our own times. But he made many canals, roads, and

bridges, including an immense bridge spanning the Rhine at Mainz. He also erected numerous churches, the most famous of which is the Cathedral of Aachen, on the pattern of St. Vitale at Ravenna, where travellers come in shoals to see the treasury, sacred relics, and memorials of its great founder. Most of the other churches built by him have ceased to exist, and in spite of his praiseworthy efforts, even Charles lacked the power to arrest the decay of architecture. As another proof of his remarkable intellect and varied activity it should be noted that, while having so little culture that he only learnt to read late in life and could scarcely write at all, and although essentially Germanic in temperament and taste, he was nevertheless a most earnest patron of classic scholarship. During every brief respite from the anxieties of war we find him simultaneously acting as legislator, supreme judge, creator of public works, and generous protector of learning. He loved to surround himself with scholars and appreciated the full importance of all the acquirements he lacked.

One of the men of learning at his Court was Paulus Diaconus, the historian of the Longobard race, who was a man of varied attainments, knew the Greek language, and wrote several works in prose and verse. He had been dear to Ratchis and Desiderius, first frequented the Court of Pavia, and afterwards that of Benevento ; he witnessed the overthrow of the Longobard kingdom, and became a monk in the Benedictine Monastery of Monte Cassino. His family must have been implicated in the plots against Charles, since, as already related, one of his brothers was kept in strict confinement by the King. Thereupon, knowing that the Emperor had a great esteem for learned men, Paulus ventured to write to him and plead his brother's cause. Afterwards he repaired to the Court in person, was made very welcome there, and his petition

was probably granted, seeing that he remained in attendance during the years 783–86. Then, home-sickness drove him back to the distant south, and again withdrawing to Monte Cassino, he there wrote his history of the Longobards.

With the aid of other learned men, either visitors to France or natives of the land, Charles was enabled to provide his kingdom with many schools, and the principal one was usually established in his own palace at Aachen, and often formed part of his Court during his travels. This special school was under the direction of Alcuin, a man of English birth and trained at York, the great centre of culture that had been transferred from Ireland to Britain. There the young Englishman became thoroughly versed in the Latin philosophy and learning he so warmly admired. Charles made his acquaintance in Italy and immediately invited him to France. So Alcuin went over there with a few companions and was the creator and superintendent of a great school or academy, of which the King and his sons often attended the meetings. The *Trivium Quadrivium*[1] and Theology were all taught there; and the principal members of the academy assumed Greek, Roman, or Biblical names. King Charles was David, Alcuin was Flaccus, his associate Angilbert was Homer, and so on. Alcuin was the director of this school from 782 to 796, and it greatly promoted the diffusion of culture not only in the Frankish dominions but throughout the whole of Europe. Together with other generous rewards to his learned and trusted adviser, the King presented Alcuin with the richly endowed Abbey of St. Martin,

[1] For the benefit of the general reader, it may be explained that *trivium* and *quadrivium* denote the ancient manner of dividing the sciences into two groups. The Trivium comprised grammar (or philology), logic, and rhetoric; the Quadrivium, music, arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy. St. Augustine is supposed to have originated this method of division.—TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.

whither he finally withdrew and wrote many of his works. Many other scholars were likewise guests at Charles's Court. There was Einhart, the Austrasian noble (770–844), who also received fat abbeys from the sovereign, and, besides writing his life ("Vita Caroli") was the author of annals full of precious details of contemporary events. There was the Neustrian noble, Angilbert, who, when already the father of a family, entered the Church and became the author of several poems and historical writings. Many other aristocrats were induced by the King to devote themselves to letters and were the founders of schools in Cathedral cities. In addition to literature this grand sovereign eagerly promoted every other branch of culture; including the development of instrumental and vocal music. He gave his attention to the revision and diffusion of manuscript copies of the Bible and also aided the diffusion of patriotic works. Even the art of calligraphy was improved in his reign, and the new form of writing, called Carolingian, was adopted.

The constitution of the Frankish Empire was the chief and central achievement of the Middle Ages. For a time it welded many very different countries and peoples into a firmly united whole, assisted the fusion of conquered and conquerors, of Roman and Teuton, of the Germanic spirit with the spirit of Greek and Roman culture; while —provisionally, at least—it promoted the harmony of the State with the Church, to which Charles was so munificent. He was constantly labouring to protect the Church and to improve its organisation, while often asserting also his right of guarding the purity of the faith. Everywhere, save in Italy, the bishops were appointed by Charles, and he always tried to keep them on good terms with one another, with the Pope and with the Counts, by means of his commissioners, the *Missi dominici*, who, being entrusted with the supervision both of justice and religion, always consisted of one layman and one ecclesiastic.

But this great organic entity, the Empire, albeit the necessary result of historic evolution, was likewise the personal achievement of one man's genius ; so partially, at least, it ended with his life. In fact, after the death of Charles, his heirs, like the Franks of earlier days, were soon at strife among themselves. Owing to the vastness of the Empire and the great diversity of its composite elements, civil war raged even more fiercely than before. A new state of society had been formed, in which the distinctive national feeling of every separate race began to react with irresistible force, thus shattering the temporary union created by the military and political genius of Charles the Great. The Empire in Italy only reached to the edge of the Garigliano, that being the limit of its actual conquests. As the Duke of Benevento contrived to retain his independence, the Longobard order of things survived for some time longer within his dominions. From this moment, in short, the history of Southern Italy begins to be entirely distinct and very different from that of the rest of the Peninsula. Besides, Church and State, Pope and Emperor were soon plunged in bitterly violent quarrels which increasingly enfeebled the new state of society erected by the Frankish Empire, so that, owing to the establishment of feudalism, it was broken up into a congeries of petty groups. But from the very bosom of feudalism and in total opposition to it, our Italian Communes were destined to arise and leap to prosperity—destined to be the first-fruits of the fusion of two different races and societies that the Empire had promoted—and to become the first initiators of modern civilisation. Nevertheless, before the Communes could take shape, both Italy and all Europe had to endure another period of dire trouble, disorder, and almost of anarchy.

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The barbarian invasions of Italy.
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